

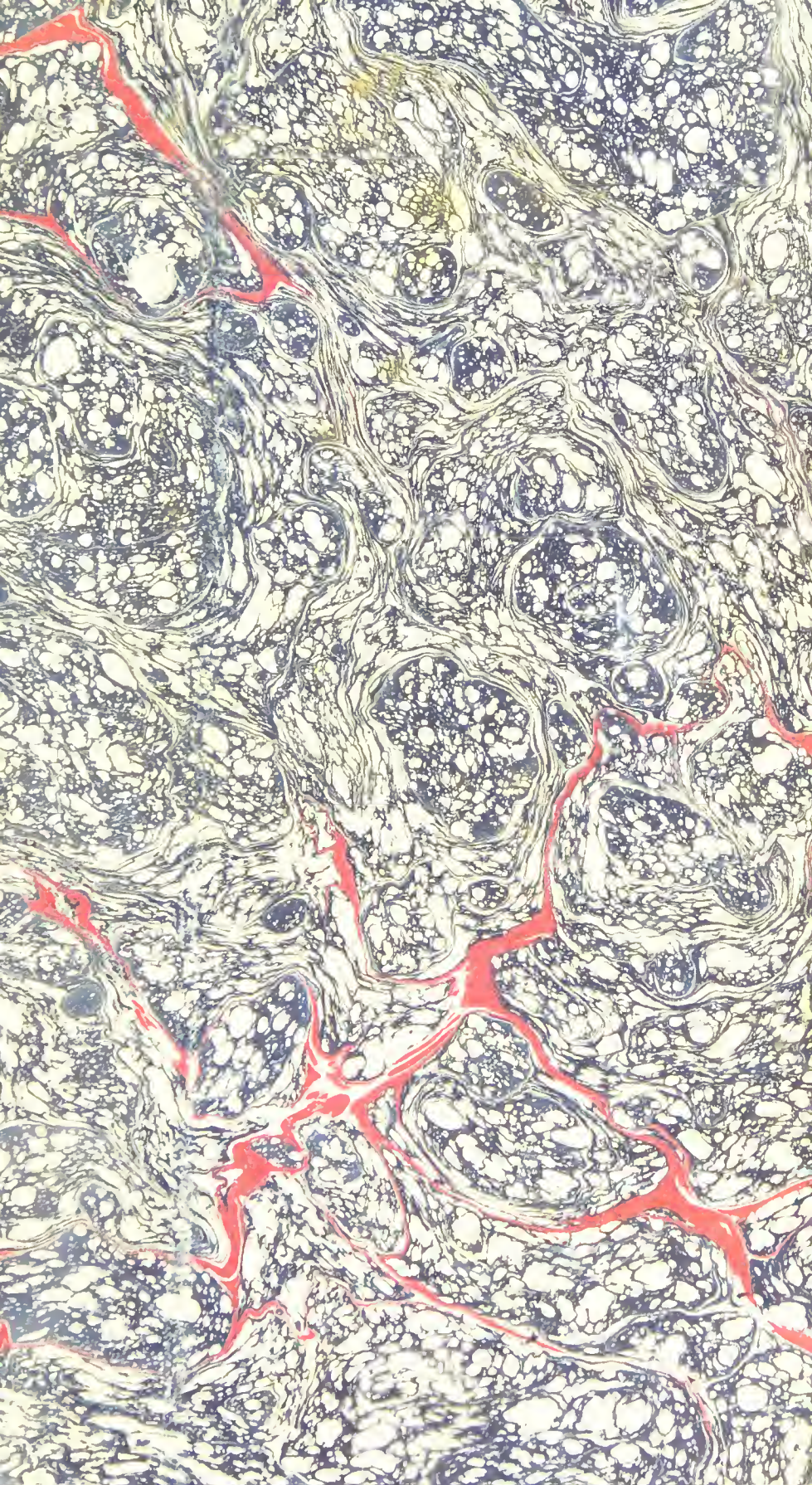


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EDWARD HENRY SCOTT.





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A. Scott





L E T T E R S.

F R O M

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Il s'agit de faire penfer, et non de faire lire.

MONTESQUIEU.

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I N T W O V O L U M E S.

V O L. II.

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L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND.

MDCCLXXXVIII.





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L E T-





L E T T E R S  
FROM  
S P A I N,  
TO  
FRIENDS IN ENGLAND.

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L E T T E R I.

*On entering Spain from France. The Country. The Mountains. National and Provincial Objects. French Government.*

Bilbao.

I HAVE entered Spain, this time, with some prepossessions in its favour, though already tolerably acquainted with it: having, on former occasions, examined the southern parts with some pleasure, I am now traversing the northern provinces of

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the *peninsula*, as the Spaniards are fond of calling it.

A small party of young people, finding or fancying themselves tired of French faces and French nonsense, readily agreed to take the opportunity of my little business in this country, and to go in search of something superior, and perhaps not without hopes of some curious adventures in these regions of romance: for, I think, the very mention of Spain awakens in the mind, especially of young people, ideas of something romantic and uncommon.

Our schemes, principles, or prejudices, once adopted, you know the fancy has a wonderful knack at confirming us in them by many artful ways, and of seducing us by her manner of colouring and shewing us the objects of inclination, and by concealing or distorting the rest. Overlooking, therefore, the many excellent and amiable qualities of the French in our frequent consultations, and imagining ourselves disgusted with their follies and affectation,

fection, we left their country, almost confirmed in the expectation of finding all the opposite qualities in Spain ;—more of pure nature, sincerity, and sound sense,—their mirth and their music, and every thing more to our taste. Now, though our hopes, as usual, have already proved partly delusive, it must be confessed, that specific differences do exist between the characters of these two nations, and that several circumstances in the approaches to Spain, on this side, are calculated to produce a favourable disposition in the traveller.

Many objects in this country concur to fill the mind with noble and pleasing sentiments. Our first sight of the Pyrenean mountains, from a vast distance, viewing their snowy tops above the clouds from the *landes*, an arid and desert plain ; then the gradual rise of that tiresome plain, as we advance, into beautiful green hills, lakes, woods, and at length to naked or snowy rocks that seem to pierce the heavens ; all contribute to inspire new and sublime ideas ; and the mind, thus warmed and

B 2

elevated,

elevated, is disposed to spread the beauties that please us, over all the objects around.

Most of these countries formed by the skirts of the Pyrenees, are beautiful, and very different from the rest of France, and, in my opinion, much superior to most of it. The human species, as you advance, seems likewise to change and improve into a more vigorous and hardy race; they are fond of their liberties, for which they have often encountered that despotism by which they are surrounded. It has been observed, that the Bayonne privateers have generally fought well: last war, they gained great credit.

Among these mountains lies Bearn, the country of Henry IV. Here he was born, and passed his infancy. Full of the idea of this excellent king, I wished to trace him from his cradle, and as it were, see where he went, and what he did; but could not prevail with the rest of the party. The imagination, led away with that heroic character, with these romantic and sublime scenes



scenes of nature, and with all my old prejudices in favour of mountaineers, I began to doubt and dispute—if a level country be fit to produce great men.

Here we meet with good country-houses, in noble situations ; also plenty, hospitality, and old hearty country manners. But most of the estates, even the smallest, are entailed, and hence little land ever comes to market. Such a stop to the circulation of property is a great hindrance to the improvement of a country.

The ports of Bayonne and St. Jean de Luz, show now a considerable spirit of commerce and improvement; but the effects of that spirit do not extend far into the country. These ports have been improved, extensive piers constructed and kept up, at a great expence ; but the oppressions of a government remote and jealous, by gradually impairing their privileges, will probably, in time, reduce these people to a common level with the rest of

their subjects, to poverty and dependence; —a prey to intendants, fermiers, gabelles, &c. The insolence of people in office will then more than counterbalance the operations of industry. Their ports will fall to ruin, and fill up, by any remission of those constant and expensive efforts that are necessary against their other powerful enemies, the sea and sand, that are perpetually rolling in upon them from the Bay of Biscay.

This leads to reflections on subjects which I would rather wish to recommend to your future consideration, than attempt to decide upon now; *viz.* Of the various objects of public concern, to distinguish that which ought to be left to provincial or local management, from what should be under that of the general or national government. The national government generally errs, I think, on the wrong side, and, assuming the management of every thing, leaves too little for the people themselves to do: overlooking the small, but more effectual, encouragement

agement and assistance which would often incite the people to help themselves, and produce more public good.

If the French government were to try some experiments of this kind, in different provinces, as has often been proposed, and give up to them the management of several branches of taxation, of revenue, and public works, they might be enabled to decide upon some general system for the whole nation. But there is not much probability of that government going so far. Were they even to begin and set heartily about it, they would probably tire in the course of it, and fail in attempting to surmount some of the various successions of difficulties that would arise. From some few instances of ignorance or dishonesty, they would hastily pronounce the provinces unfit to be trusted with their own affairs.

We now go on with our journey, and enter Spain through great variety and successions of grand mountains, where I

wished to have staid much longer to indulge in contemplating those majestic scenes of nature: but I will not, therefore, detain you there, with poetic, glowing, or raving descriptions, which are generally better calculated to amuse the writer than the reader, and prove mostly inadequate to the purposes of transmitting the ideas or the sentiments intended.



## L E T T E R II.

*Guipuscoa. Lime. Police. People. Women.  
Frontier. Industry. Liberty. Policy.  
Pasage. St. Sebastian's.*

ON entering Spain by Guipuscoa, pleased and elevated by that noble and majestic kind of country,—from the heavy sands, and bad roads of Guienne, to the new and excellent ones of these provinces,—from the heathy or naked *landes*, to these magnificent mountains, which are mostly cultivated, or covered with woods, we continued still, for a time, prepossessed in favour of the country in general, and rather blind to the surrounding poverty and dirt, which, however, soon began to appear in various shapes.

In these northern, and in other parts of Spain, the want of lime-stone is a more capital defect than you may at first imagine.  
The

The little lime they can afford to procure, must be brought by sea. The want of neatness, and of finishing, in their ordinary buildings,—the dead and melancholy appearance of the country, though tolerably filled with villages, are among the consequences of this want.

Their towns and villages are, even here, likewise deficient in other little objects of police and cleanliness, in contrivance and manner of building, on which, with us, depend many of the comforts of life; and still more in the internal parts of Spain. So that, as we advance into the country, the mortifying and loathsome prospects of human misery and indolence increase upon us, and are too often sufficient to damp the spirits of the most cheerful and invincible traveller: and more especially, if he is satisfied with a first view, and does not stop long enough anywhere to learn the language, and to discover some of those valuable and agreeable qualities to be found in the character and *trato*, i. e. the disposition and behaviour of many excellent individuals

dividuals of both sexes; and in the manners and humours of the people, all of which so generally and warmly attach those who stay any time among them,

After some conversation and debate, I think our party all agree, that the Spanish character is readily distinguishable from the French, and in some things rather advantageously, amidst all their scarcity, their poverty, and negligence of appearance. In the female sex, the difference is striking. In many, the figure and manner, the eyes and cast of features, the shape and air, the kind of animation and sensibility, more temperate and graceful, yet far more significant and powerful. In short, the sex seem here a different, and most of us think, a superior race of beings, even to those we left on the other side of the Pyrenees, whom nevertheless, you know, I highly esteem.

Spain has here a good defensible frontier. Põnterabia, now neglected, has formerly resisted the whole power of France,

France. But this is the best part of their frontier. They could not now keep the French out of their country in case of war. The other passes of the Pyrenees are in the possession of France, as at Belgarde, &c. This is a material circumstance in their alliance, and secures its duration.

The French, by the way, they say, begin to work a good copper-mine in these mountains, towards Navarre, within the Spanish frontier; and if they can once erect mills, and manufacture that metal as we do, they may, in time, copper their ships as readily, with several other advantages.

The inhabitants of these three or four northern provinces of Spain are, I think, a more stout, hardy, and healthy race, than the rest. They eat more animal food than most others, except the English, and, like them, are of a noble, frank, and generous temper. They are distinguishable enough from those of the other provinces, in character, person, and countenance, by one who lives in Spain, though not so readily  
by



by foreigners, who consider all as Spaniards who inhabit the kingdom: but a Biscayan, or a Catalan, is offended by that appellation.

There are several visibly distinct races of people in Spain. These are among the most laborious. They cultivate their mountains (and their country consists of little else) to the very tops, chiefly with instruments worked by hand, as large hoes, forks, &c. and in which both sexes labour equally and together. This is the only country in Spain where planting is attended to. There are laws that oblige them to plant when they cut their trees: timber being necessary to their iron-works and ship building, and it adds great beauty to the country. These branches of industry might be carried much farther, if the Spanish government could be wise enough to let them alone, and only buy their iron, their guns, and ships, and contrive for them some gradually increasing demand or market, so as to increase and employ so useful a people. But government is supplied from abroad with several things

things which, it is said, might be made or produced here.

These three *Bascongada* provinces, Guipuscoa, Alava, and Biscaya, together with Navarre, are now the only remaining asylums in the peninsula for liberty: and its effects still evidently appear in their character, industry, and population, to the obvious advantage of both the governing and governed. But some of the over-wise Spanish lawyers are already beginning to embroil this business, and to persuade government that these people are too free,—that they are bad and disloyal subjects: and this over-wise government seems inclined to believe such doctrine, and to shew a mean and unjust jealousy of their prosperity.

Spain has certainly hitherto found her account in leaving these provinces thus loosely attached to her, on their own terms, appointing only one or two of their chief magistrates, and a commissary to take care of the revenue; permitting them to make their own laws, raise their taxes, and to govern

govern their own affairs nearly as they please. Every advantage and success that could well be expected, have attended these measures, and would go on to attend them probably still more in future, if there could be wisdom and liberality enough in the Spanish government only to assist them in promoting their own patriotic measures, and help the leading men among them to improve the country. And such are the best, and perhaps the only maxims by which any nation or community should ever permit itself to govern another. We should, in such cases, do all the good we can, without stopping to calculate the benefits that may result to ourselves. Various advantages to the superior power, will generally be the fruits of such measures; and the produce more certain and direct, than by all the political and usurious bargains, laws, or treaties, that could previously be made to secure their obedience or their custom. But such measures I doubt whether their government is capable of pursuing for a sufficient length of time: and it is not so much from any plan or design, as from indolence,

dolence, inability, accident, and other circumstances of the Spanish government; that these mountaineers have hitherto escaped the same yoke as their neighbouring provinces.

The situation and success of these are certainly worth the consideration of a traveller, and may furnish useful political lessons for other nations and their dependents; and likewise for Spain herself: for with her distant colonies she has followed contrary maxims, and has generally succeeded badly. If you had followed such maxims with your colonies, if you had slackened instead of tightened the reins of government, and permitted the sovereignty gradually to relax and diminish, both you and they might probably have gone on to prosper for ever together: that connection, if left alone to its natural progression, would have gradually changed into some intercourse more beneficial to both, but would never, probably, have arrived at a total separation, and might always have promoted your mutual political advantages: and let us still hope, in case of  
a po-

a political separation, that you may both soon recover your tempers, so as to restore an intimate commercial connexion.

These northern provinces having proved more interesting than was expected, we have been agreeably disappointed, in spite of the defects already mentioned; and I wished to dwell in the country; and on the subject, more than time will permit to either; so that you may escape with only a few more miscellaneous observations, as usual.

*Pasage*—is a very good little sea-port, well formed, and shut up, by nature; now in possession of the Carraca company; who have almost a monopoly of the cocoa trade, which must be very considerable: there is a vast deal of chocolate drank in Europe. I have heard, that the country about Carraca is among the richest and best settled of any in Spanish America.

Here is an iron mill, erected by D'Aragori. It produces about three hundred bars



*per* week. His son, the Marquis d'Iranda, is now travelling in quest of useful knowledge,—that of trades and manufactures.

*St. Sebastian's*—a curious promontory; a rock projecting into the sea. Its summit is fortified, and might be made very strong. It forms a tolerable port and shelter against some winds, though open to the north. By the help of a mole or pier, it might be made a tolerable harbour, sheltered from north-west round to north-east. But the town, like many others, built in times of ignorance and civil wars, stands in the wrong place. Those built for defence are generally found to be ill adapted for commerce or conveniency; and men remain, by habit, fixed to places and customs, long after the causes that establish them have ceased. This is very generally the case in Spain.

## LETTER III.

*Romantic Ruins and Situations. Strangers  
attached to Spain. Society of Arts.  
Good Conde. Industry.*

THEIR towns and villages, in these northern provinces, have generally something about them that is very romantic and interesting in situation and manner of building. Some retain a certain air of antique magnificence ; but as they are too generally approaching to a state of ruin and decline, they strike with a melancholy idea of some former better times, and the mind deplores the vicissitudes of human greatness, and its productions. Ruins do, indeed, form the striking features of this whole peninsula : so many old castles, declining towns and mansions, the sad remains of former grandeur, so frequently to be met with ; together with the peculiar romantic

humour and manners of the natives, all contribute to keep up the idea of this being the country of romance. I longed to restore some of their magnificent old mansions to their original state. I believe one of the few pleasures of travelling through Spain may consist in indulging the fancy in this species of castle-building, in improving and beautifying the face of the country.

The bold and romantic situation of several of their little towns, in these two provinces, as Vergara, &c. pendent on the sides of rocky mountains, over a rapid stream, among other bold and pleasing sentiments, suggests to the fancy, that of a hardy and vigorous race of people, which is presently confirmed by seeing the children carelessly climbing the steep hills and precipices, and early employed in manly occupations.

But so much old, and so little new, even in the best provinces of Spain, is certainly a strong symptom of decline, with whatever confidence a few people about the court may flatter themselves, and their  
good

good monarch, into notions of their present rising state of prosperity and advancement.

It is hard to account for that singular attachment which many of us foreigners, who come from better countries, contract for this of Spain, and having once lived here, makes us long to return to it as to a native land, and give a preference to the poverty and desolation of this over the wealth and acquirements of more polished nations: perhaps it could not be well accounted for, without leading you through the country, and shewing you what it is we like. The warm predilection, observable in many of the English in particular, for this country, may proceed from some secret sympathy, and similarity of character and taste; the same natural and original dislike of the French,—a similar turn of mind in many things, are obvious enough, and may help to form this kind of mental union: it is likewise to the powerful attractions of the sex in Spain, that we may ascribe much of this attachment,—to their peculiar graces,

spirit, and conversation: the footing of equality on which they live and work with the men in this country, is also remarkable.

I was highly pleased, you may be sure, to find in these mountains, a society and academy for the encouragement of useful arts and knowledge, lately founded on good and benevolent principles. They have their yearly meetings alternately at the capital of each of these three provinces, *viz.* at Vitoria, Vergara, and Bilbao. But embarrassed by the jealous and mischievous spirit of their government and religion, they are forced to proceed with too much caution in their choice of professors, books, subjects; otherwise, some inquisitor, informer, or friar, or perhaps some French influence at court, may destroy all the intended fabric in its foundation.

Their success likewise depends too much on the life of one man, the Conde de Peña Florida, the principal author and promoter of all these improvements. He is one of those



those old-fashioned country gentlemen who prefer a country life to a town residence; he chuses to live at home, upon his estate, and do all the good he can. Once a year, I understand, he goes to court. He has had influence with most of the gentlemen of this country, to follow his example. By such active benevolence, and by inter-marriages, he seems the father of a whole country. Surely, in life there cannot be a happier condition. His liberality seldom appears in acts of mere charity, which generally serves only to promote indolence and vice. It is by encouraging useful trades and manufactures, that he diffuses, through the whole country, a spirit of active industry and emulation.

He is obliged to have priests in his academy, and he seems to have got one at the head of it, of as liberal a turn of mind as could be wished. He was very happy to talk freely to us; a pleasure which can seldom be indulged in these countries, and which we know not how to appreciate, by its being already so common among us.

The Conde sends his sons to travel for real information, and chiefly in the useful arts. I found one of them at Paris, and hope I have prevailed on him to visit England, with several others of his countrymen, who are studying there, with great application and success,—chiefly in chemistry, natural or experimental philosophy, with the practice of some of the most useful trades. Another of the Conde's sons was sent to Sweden, to learn every thing concerning iron and steel. But he unfortunately died, or the good Conde might, by this time, have succeeded in some more of his patriotic schemes, particularly the making of steel, to which this country is well adapted, as it produces all sorts of iron and charcoal.

He continues, however, indefatigable; and it is probable that some of his favourite projects may yet succeed, or, at least, be begun, if he lives long enough. But as such men are very scarce in this country, it is not so probable that his improvements may be taken up, and carried on, after his death:—such as making more roads, and rendering

rendering rivers navigable, forming and improving more harbours on their coast.

They already make small arms at Palencia, and have lately exported considerable quantities to our old friends, and new enemies, in America; and have now large orders from their own government. This, with several other symptoms, shews clearly enough, what conduct we have yet long to expect from this nation.

## L E T T E R IV.

*Iron. Trades. Music. Timber. Bilbao.  
Wool. Clergy. Commerce. Bourbons.  
Smuggling. The Poor. Mr. Bowles.  
Roads.*

I AM glad that you approve of my dwelling more than usual on such scenes, and little commencements of industry as this country exhibits. There are, in this miserable world, but few of those resting-places where one wishes to stop and contemplate the rise or infancy of human improvements, which is always more pleasant than their old age or decline.

You know that iron is as yet almost the only export of this hardy race. It may amount to about 200,000 quintals a year. Their iron works are small, and scattered over the country for the convenience of wood and charcoal, in the use of which,  
great

great œconomy is observed. I doubt if our new method of using *coke* can produce such good iron as this. We visited several of those little works, and were there told, that the eight or ten men, usually employed in each, can produce about eighty quintals of pig from the ore *per* week, for  $5\frac{1}{2}$  reals *per* quintal; that the ore generally gives about one-third iron. This may set you about inquiring concerning ours in England.

Such is the connexion of the arts, that one brings many others along with it. One good staple commodity in a country will create a plenty in every thing else. This little business of iron has improved them in several other things, by creating a demand for them, as in agriculture, planting, weaving, and in several trades for tools.

When you visit this country, I would wish you to stop a while at Vergara, where, I think, you may be amply repaid for your time and trouble in climbing these mountains to get at it. This good Conde de  
Peña



Peña Florida has made these people musical too. They now translate and act Italian operas among themselves, and fill all the parts very tolerably, both of the stage and orchestra. This is probably of importance in civilizing a country. However well inclined you may be to laugh at such things now-a-days, we have the wisest men of antiquity on our side; and, I think, the moral effects of music are obvious even now, here, and elsewhere, increasing and improving sociability, humanity, and some of our best sentiments.

In these, and other mountainous parts of Spain, some good timber still remains, owing to the difficulty of bringing it away. They now talk of making roads for that purpose; but I doubt the execution of most Spanish government projects. These poor mountaineers are the only people in Spain, who have industry and foresight enough to plant and replace the consumption. A large and good kind of pine or fir abounds yet in some parts of these northern mountains; above 6000, I was told,

told, have been found in a space of half a league square. They have lately been able to get some oak down to the Cavada and St. Ander; and some has been carried down the Ebro for Carthagera, which, by the way, is their most convenient port and arsenal for work. They likewise carry some timber from Sierra Morena, down the Guadalquivir, for Cadix. They cut up timber to great waste, using large oaks for small vessels, and in general, sacrifice too much to security. Such has been their history in almost every thing. *Too much caution*, might be the Spanish motto. Their works are generally too great, too strong, too secure, but without sufficient science, taste, or œconomy.

Bilbao—an agreeable place, a pretty little river, and a fine hilly country,—but the town again in the wrong place; on the wrong side of the river, and subject to be overflowed. The inhabitants offer to change it themselves, but the court of Madrid refuses them leave to do it. Most Spanish towns have some such capital defect.

fect. There did belong to this port, before last war; about two hundred and fifty vessels; but they do not now amount to one hundred and twenty, though they have been ever since increasing. Such are the fruits they reap from their wars with England.

The wool exported here may be about 6000 bags *per annum*, of 50 *lb.* each. at about three reals *per lb.* But this export trade is now gradually moving to St. Ander, by order of the court, and is probably in consequence of the jealousy with which government begins to view the liberties and privileges of these provinces, as they begin to shew symptoms of prosperity. Some are gaining considerably here by our Americans, and they seem to get more of their ready money than the French.

These northern Spaniards, ever active, hardy, generous, and free, have always been the best soldiers and sailors of the peninsula. Their government is of the mixed kind, like all those where there is any freedom left, and where each class has

some influence ; but here, the nobles and the church have, as usual, been gaining more than their due share, particularly the latter ; and I believe one of the greatest obstructions in these provinces, to the progress and prosperity which might have been expected from their degree of political freedom, has been their religion, and the influence of their clergy, which is too great, and often tyrannically exerted. It is seen in their jealousy of strangers, arising from an excessive dread of whatever might endanger the purity of the faith, or diminish their own power. Indeed, throughout Spain, there is nothing of importance can be done, but the church must have a hand in it. I find, even here, that the clergy are admitted to their council of commerce, which might be a very convenient and a beneficial institution, if these gentlemen did not, as usual, take the lead, and obstruct its best operations.

The Dutch, French, and Germans, now furnish Spain and Portugal with a number of articles of trade that used to be sent from  
England.

England. May not this partly arise from a kind of pride, or commercial greatness in our countrymen, who, disdaining the small profits, and the business of retail, will all be great merchants? Our formerly numerous and industrious retailers are certainly diminishing, and we are gradually losing the foreign supply of many articles. However, I find here yet one English warehouse, with a tolerable assortment of goods: but it is soon to be given up, though almost the last of the kind remaining in Spain: whereas there used to be one, at least, in every principal town. In the more inland parts, many English things, that used to be common, are now not to be found. Some knives were shewn me, for common use, at  $2\frac{2}{3}$  reals *per* dozen, from St. Etienne en Forein. Can your people at Birmingham, with all their machinery, furnish them here so cheap?

The jealousy, I had almost said hatred, of the present Spanish government to every thing English, appears stronger every day. All the effects of this Bourbon government,  
which



which were so wisely foreseen in the time of King William, we may expect, will gradually take place: and both the Spaniards and we may long regret, that they had not then spirit and union sufficient to chuse a king of their own nation, and a form of government of the right and ancient model, with such improvements as we could have taught them to introduce. Though the Spaniards do not yet quite readily obey, and imbibe all the Bourbon policy and prejudices, they will in time, and probably must gradually conform; and the progress is perceptible enough in our own memory.

Smuggling increases here, as usual, with the duties, which are almost annually augmented, on English commodities. It might increase still more, if your usual diligence in the retail, and the enterprising spirit of your merchants, were not considerably abated: I believe this government will succeed in excluding all the most important branches of your trade from this country and its colonies; and the more

readily, as you seem to favour and assist them in it, by the false policy of complaisance promoted by Mr. Grenville; a policy which will generally be more unsuccessful with this nation than with almost any other, in obtaining any commercial or political advantages in return. This government may succeed still better by the effects of a war: having once, by that means, shut out your trade, they will more easily keep it out: and this may be one of the objects they have in view by taking a part in this contest.

In short, if you are politically wise, you will set this government down as your natural and irreconcilable enemy, and prepare to make the most of that state of things which you cannot alter. And if you are commercially wise, you will smuggle all you can into their country and colonies. By these means, you will gain, or rather retain, the people, who are fond of all trade with the English, and you may always defy their government.

Another

Another good thing beyond what we expected to find in this country is, at Pamplona, a very tolerable police in the provision and management of their poor; one of the most difficult parts of public œconomy. They receive and provide for all that come, for a certain time, and, I believe, assist them in their way to their respective homes. If they could employ them, and extend this kind of establishment throughout the country, it might be of great service to the nation. This is originally, I believe, promoted by the clergy, who are generally very charitable in Spain. Though the plan partakes of the usual defects, and of those incident to their order, we must not condemn the whole because some parts of it are imperfect. Their principal motive being the love of God, the good of the country, or the advantage of the poor people themselves, are not sufficiently considered. But these defects are found to attend this branch of police in almost all countries, except, perhaps, in Holland. It is said, the Dutch have succeeded the best, in the most essen-

tial points of this branch, *viz.* by finding employment for their poor, and in making them work.

To supply the wants of men, by any means independent of their own labour, is doing them, and the public, more harm than good, and will be only giving a premium to promote poverty as a profession. When sufficient employment for all the members, does not arise out of the nature of the society, from the interest of individuals, we may doubt if any public management can, in any other way, supply the deficiency. Whatever system, or mode of supply, is adopted, to find proper people who will be willing and able to apply sufficiently to the administration, or descend to manage the private interests of people better than themselves, will still be difficult or impracticable in the present state of society. It will probably be always an object, either so small as to fall under the direction of men too mean and interested; or it will be too great, and too troublesome, to be well administered by any men.

To assist the poor with any good effect, it must probably be done at their own homes (while they can have any home), in support of the domestic or natural state of society. The bringing them from thence can seldom answer any good purpose. They can then only be formed into communities unnatural, inactive, and burdensome to the public. Such forced societies should never be attempted, till the natural are clearly proved to be insufficient for the purpose in hand, which is seldom the case. When forced to adopt them, for the purposes of war, education, or charity, we see their deficiencies, and they often fail in answering the ends proposed. The Romans, for the purposes, at once, of securing conquests, defence, and cultivation, planted military colonies, wisely joining the natural with the military state of society.

I had the pleasure, at Bilbao, of meeting with honest old Bowles, who has written a short natural history of Spain. A plain sensible man of science; a rare thing.



You will see his book, which may not interest you much in England, but may be an amusing companion in this country. I was sorry to discover that he has never been so happy here as he was given to hope. Like most strangers who engage in the service of this nation, he is sorry for having dedicated his time to the vain attempt of being useful to it. The rudest nations are always the most jealous of foreigners. The civilization of a people is not improperly estimated by the manner in which strangers are usually received and treated among them.

I cannot quit these Bascongada provinces without mentioning their roads, which they have executed nobly and œconomically, and in which the Spanish government has, fortunately for them, had nothing to do. The carrying roads zig-zag over some of their steep mountains, as at Sierra de Orduña, are really great and stupendous works, at once useful and magnificent; while Spain supinely looks on, as if ashamed to be outdone, or too proud

to

to imitate their example. For these twenty or thirty years past, the wise counsels of Madrid have been planning and making roads, and are only still at the beginning of the business, having executed only a few leagues near the capital, and at the principal sea-ports. They have not yet been able to take up the road from these frontiers, and carry it on, at least, to Burgos, as they proposed and promised.

## L E T T E R V.

*Mountains. Cannon. St. Ander. Ships.  
Foundery. Military. Asturias. Liberty  
with Security. Monopolies. Govern-  
ment.*

WE now go on towards Galicia, following along the coast this course of mountains. You may conceive it a continuation of the Pyrenees, terminating in Cape Finisterre, and forming one of the great pieces of the charpente, or skeleton, of this peninsula, which is composed of a few of these curiously connected ranges of mountains, and a few large plains between them. This range seems like a great wall, or mole of mountains thrown together, in a manner as if intended to keep the sea out of the great plain of Old Castile, behind it. It seems now to separate comfort, industry, and activity, from sloth, dirt, and poverty.

The

The countries it comprehends are Navarre, the three Bascongada provinces, Mons Espinosa, Asturias, and Galicia. It then turns to the south to form and cut off Portugal.

But before we proceed, I must try to recollect some particulars. In Biscaya, I met with Anciola, who made the hammered iron cannon. He seems to think, he has now conquered all the difficulties, and that it would be easier, on another trial, to succeed yet better. He has made a 3 pounder of 3 quintals weight,—an 8 pounder of 8 ditto,—a 24 pounder of 39 ditto,—and a 32 pounder of 52 ditto. He says, they can now be made to stand all sorts of proof. But we must yet doubt the possibility of their being made all equally to be depended on, or of each being equally so throughout, till they have much more experience of them. Doubtless both the metals now in use, cast iron and gun metal, are defective for the purposes of artillery, while those of the one kind often burst, and the others melt; yet, I fear, it will be long before we  
find

find a metal without one or other of those defects,

I am here farther fortified in my prepossession in favour of mountaineers. From the Mons Espinosa are generally chosen the guards for the king's person, and for several other most confidential services. The Asturian servants are everywhere preferred for the same qualities of honour and fidelity.

St. Ander and the Cavada form a very spacious, noble port, and might be much improved. But its being rather easily attacked, may have occasioned this over-cautious government to neglect it, and the important uses that might be made of it. It was here that Mons. Gautier, their new French builder, constructed his first ships. I am told, by judges, that they are too crank and fine, and do not carry their lower guns high enough out of the water. Though he has since built some very good ships, most of their marine corps, I find, do still think that none of his are equal to  
some



some that were built by their English builders, as by Obriant, and others. But Mons. G. has been the means of getting all those Englishmen displaced, on pensions, and is introducing the French methods and establishments.

The Spaniards had better, perhaps, have improved upon their old construction, than adopt so much of a new one. A certain magnificent greatness in the size and strength of their ships was probably better suited to their pride and obstinacy. It is not likely that their characters can ever be so changed, as to render them active and ready in working their ships, like the French and English. Certain points of national character, which cannot be readily changed, should rather be indulged and turned to account. A wise reformer will attend to the disposition of the people, and on that foundation build his system,

Their cannon foundery at the Cavada, is lately on the decline, since it has been under the management of some Germans  
sent

sent them by France. Their guns have generally failed, which brought them to deal with our Carron company, with whom, however, they soon began to be dissatisfied. Their proof is too severe.—*Over-caution* again. In proving their guns, they fix the breech in a rock, to prevent the recoil, by which peculiar strains and vibrations are probably given to parts of the piece, that never take place on actual service. Bowles says, that the most material defect of their present foundery, is the want of the usual mixture of their different ores: they used to mix one-third of Somorostro, their famous mine for soft iron, which, it seems, is now neglected.

Among contending opinions, in military as well as other matters, we cannot expect the best always to prevail: but where we see the worst frequently adopted, to trace the cause we must look upwards: and we must not be surprised to find great deficiencies, in a nation so situated and circumstanced; especially when it is considered how much is now expected from

from men in the higher military stations, since the late advances in science, and in all the arts relating to war, in which their nation, now so depressed and separated from the rest of Europe, must be left behind.

Without a head equal to judge and employ the different merits and talents of the subordinate members, however great those merits may be, their best effects will be lost. Perhaps there is only one effectual way of doing this, that which the King of Prussia has taken, by making himself acquainted with the principles of every thing,—with the duty of every rank and employ,—with the leading rules of every kind of work, trade, or profession,—and with the personal merits and character of all his officers: all which he accomplishes in the most direct and masterly way, not through the usual road of dulness, called application.

We now proceed on our difficult but delightful journey, often along the shore, by narrow paths, on dreadful precipices,  
with

with the additional horror of having those places pointed out to us, where men and mules, &c. have fallen down, and have been dashed to pieces before they reached the distant ocean beneath.

These Asturias present us with new and noble scenes and prospects, in a style of beauty again different from the Biscayan—mountains more steep, sublime, and magnificent; more frequently cut with little rapid rivers, and narrow vales, overhung with rocks and woods. The mind is interested and elevated, and in moving along, anxiously pursues, with alternate hopes and fears, the changing scenery—the coast intersected with little bays and mouths of rivers; and studded with rocky promontories; salmon fisheries, scattered villages, romantically situated, though few and poor, diversify the prospects.

Great variety of strata, marbles, and ores, appear in the precipices. There must be mines worth working here. The people are strong and rustic, though not so numerous,

numerous, nor so industrious, as the Biscayan,—visibly a different race, with more pride and indolence. I could here conceive a strong resemblance to the old Roman faces. The cause may be traced in their history.

Several of these bays and rivers might be made tolerable sea-ports, with little labour; and probably, some manufactures of the simpler kinds of industry might be introduced here with advantage. These are, perhaps, now the only provinces in Spain that are capable of it; the rest have exceeded that period; money having become among them too cheap or plenty. So that, in the present state of things, Spain cannot elsewhere force any manufacture that will be capable of contending with foreign industry, by which she will be underfold in foreign markets, and thereby the chief motive and support of the industry she is trying to introduce, are cut off. To form a flourishing manufactory requires a foreign market. Home consumption, and particularly that  
of



of Spain, will be insufficient for the purpose.

To improve a country, I conceive that some degree of liberty and security must be first established, and then industry, which is the real riches, will gradually, of itself, follow and produce its own signs, money, stock, and credit. Whereas money, or any other of the signs, or arbitrary measure of riches, poured into a country before that period, will not promote but prevent industry, and tend to impoverish the people by diminishing their exertions. When they awake, and discover that money is neither food nor raiment,—that they have been led to mistake the sign for the substance, and have been only gathering the fallen and perishable fruit, while they neglected the tree that produced it,—it is then too late to contend with the established industry of cheaper countries. From those they will continue to be supplied for their money, as long as they have it. Their customs, manners, and habits of life, will then be formed on this

arrangement. We know that men, in general, will work only so far as they are forced to it by necessity, and the people of this nation will be forced to it at least as late as any others. But during all this time the arts vanish, and the country is depopulated. Thus we may fancy and trace the decline of Spain.

In these provinces, however, where money is not seen to be so plentiful, and materials may be had, a spirit of industry might be raised by those who understand the principles and the nature of it, but not by monopolies, prohibitions, or exclusive privileges; nor by royal manufactories, on great and expensive plans at first, where jobs and superintendence generally eat up all the profits: yet these are the only methods hitherto devised by this government for that purpose, and being so conformable to their character and designs, it is not probable they can soon advance far beyond those ideas in arts and policy.

This government seems not to know, that the proper means of improvement are wanting, or deficient throughout the country: that there are no country gentlemen, or middle ranks, nor sufficient capitals to undertake or assist in any great or useful improvements. The great proprietors are detained at court. Nor do they know, that small and rude beginnings are generally the best, and that nature has destined every thing, industry, invention, legislation, stock, credit, &c. to go through a progress and gradation.

But where pride and indolence are the inveterate habits of both government and people, and the higher classes are become unfit for business, there can be but little hopes of the return of industry, or of any of those great and patriotic exertions which, under their ancient constitution, before they fell a victim to despotism, animated and enriched the nation, and through the successive reigns of several princes, threatened Europe with too powerful a superiority.

Full of those romantic ideas, and planning, as I rode along, various schemes of improvement, it struck me what a noble employment it would be for a prince of Asturias to be invested with the actual administration of these provinces, which might, at the same time, promote the happiness of those people, and serve him as an apprenticeship in the art of governing a kingdom.

## L E T T E R VI.

*Rivadeo. Winds. Provincial Characters  
and Distinctions. Galicia. Government.  
Marine.*

TO enter Galicia, we cross at Rivadeo, a large inlet of the sea, the mouth of a river, and a noble spacious port. It might be much improved, by moving some sand-banks, and perhaps by moles and embanking to confine the stream. There was once an idea of making Rivadeo a king's port, and some doubts whether Vigo, Ferrol, or it, would answer most of the purposes.

Here are the ruins of a linen manufactory: several having been lately attempted in this province, but without effect, by government, on their usual impracticable scale and manner.

We



We waited here two days, literally, for a fair wind to go on by land. These mountainous countries are frequently tormented, as they style it, with high winds, which destroy their little crops, and throw down mules, travellers, houses, trees, &c. I believe most of these high cape countries and peninsulas that project into the ocean, are more subject to storms than the inland plains. They here probably attract more than their proportion of the clouds and rains, so much wanted in the interior parts of this kingdom. The northern parts of Spain may be considered as a fine climate; they are rather subject to rain, and some storms, but the atmosphere being clear, and the fair weather pleasant, the country is healthy.

Though there are some points of national character, and a manner, that more or less run through all the different inhabitants of this nation, as a certain appearance of gravity, and steady equanimity of behaviour, even when they are most facetious; though a sameness of taste, amusements, and pas-

sions, prevail; yet there are obviously distinct races of people. The northern, the middle or Castilian, and the southern provinces, are plainly different characters. Much might be written on these distinctions, and yet not be very useful or intelligible to those who have not seen the country. The Catalan is probably the most industrious and active of the whole, but passionate and variable. This character of passion and sensibility, arising from a kind of irritability of the mind or frame, runs through the southern provinces, and seems in general, I think, to follow the sun throughout the world. Though there are frequently strong shades of difference in character between neighbouring nations and provinces in the same latitude, as in this nation between the Catalan, Valencian, Andalusian; there is likewise more resemblance than they themselves chuse to perceive; for, like most neighbouring countries, they only see and dislike each other's faults and differences.

This Galicia is again a different kind of country from the last, and though a continuation

tinuation of the same range of mountains, these are of a different shape, soil, and composition, and inhabited by a distinct race of people. Other nations are divided into provinces arbitrarily, but Spain is so by nature. This is generally effected by some remarkable rivers or mountains. These divisions of nature have been formerly separate kingdoms, and more populous than at present; though all accounts of former population should be received with doubts and allowances.

These Gallegos seem mostly poor and ragged, are rather a small or short race of people, and have a strong resemblance to the peasantry of some of the French provinces. I fancy they are rendered short and thick by the custom of carrying burdens on their heads, particularly the women, who bear very heavy loads in that manner, and often carry the men across the rivers on their heads in a basket.

You know this province, uniting its forces with those of Prince Henry of Burgundy, conquered Portugal from the Moors. There is still a great resemblance between the Portuguese and these people in figure, manners, names, and language.

They are tolerably industrious, or rather laborious, but without much spirit or skill in their industry. The country is rather populous, and most of their mountains are in some degree of cultivation. They root and cut up the furze and brushwood with a hoe, an implement which they use much, and with some dexterity, though it is not so good as that used in Biscaya. They then plow the land thus cleared, with a couple of small, poor oxen, or cows, and a miserable little plough that costs four or five shillings. Though laborious, their poverty obstructs their improvements. They labour much to produce a little rye on grounds that would give them better things, as potatoes, and grasses for their poor starved cattle. In some of their lower lands, they breed a tolerable race, of which they send  
many

many into Spain. They have there, for winter food, some good turnips. From their good lands they get three crops in two years, rye, Indian corn, and turnips; but these are poor, and wear out the soil, as neither fallows, manure, nor sufficient tillings are used. In some places, they turn water on the declivities for grafs, but with little skill or œconomy; drowning one acre with water that would serve ten. This produces a coarse rank grafs, like rushes.

We Englishmen, my good friend, must visit poor countries in order to know how little food will suffice for either the human or brute creation to support mere existence. That they should here lose numbers of their cattle from want, is not so surprising, as that so many should survive the winter, with such scanty provision for them. But I mean not to be diffuse, or deal in particulars. It is only general conclusions I wish to give you.

Popula-



Population is certainly not the only criterion of the riches or strength of a country. The character and qualities of the inhabitants are surely of importance, as well as their numbers. What would be the use, for example, of the highest population, if half were beggars? If the idle should amount to such a number as to require most of the surplus labour of those who work, what revenue would be collected for the state? Yet this seems nearly the case in some parts of Spain; and hence the difficulty of levying any taxes on the land, or its produce. Nothing but the rapacity of the Catholic church, and the great influence of their clergy over the minds of this superstitious people, could make the tithes and religious contributions so productive as they are found to be in Spain.

Galicia however, though poor, is of great importance to Spain, particularly in two chief articles of export, cattle and people. The last annually emigrate in great numbers to Spain and Portugal, where they become

9 exceed-

exceedingly useful in agriculture, and a variety of menial services, which the poorest ragged natives of those countries are too proud and indolent to perform. Forty or fifty thousand of these Gallegos are computed to be thus employed. Some of them return with a little money; and what does not go to the church, is hoarded, and often buried. They cannot bring themselves to part with any of it, even for the certain profit of improving their own lands, and increasing their income. This, and some other unnatural habits of avarice, sufficiently shew that they are, and have long been, oppressed, probably by both church and state.

The constant export or emigration of their people may be one cause of their population, and of the fecundity of their women, who are not afraid, as elsewhere, of having children. But it would be difficult to make some Spaniards comprehend that the export of any thing could possibly increase its produce.

There

There has been too great and too sudden an influx of money here also, from various sources, as well from the colonies, in common with the rest of the nation, as from the king's works at Ferrol and Coruña, and from having opened these ports to the Havannah and Buenos Ayres. They now want to introduce manufactures, when it is too late and impracticable. This influx seems to impede instead of promoting agriculture. Besides, the produce here seems to be limited by the nature of the soil, and by the character of the people, and does not, as in most other countries, increase with the demand. From former plenty, there is now a scarcity of every thing but money.

Many of the effects of bad government can hardly be foreseen, nor be easily accounted for when they happen. In the distance of a few leagues, I found the price of labour nearly doubled. About Mondonedo, four reals *per* day, and

and about Ferrol, seven and eight reals. There are similar changes in the prices of provisions, and especially of corn, in small distances, and in a very short time. The variations within the year are seldom less than double, or two to one, and often more, in spite of their *tasas*, or affizes, and all their arbitrary laws and regulations to fix those prices.

These are subjects not undeserving your study and observation. You will probably find, that this government is not constituted so as to discover, or sufficiently to care, how things are connected in this world, as in a chain. They ignorantly detach an indeterminate number of the links, and are surprised to find themselves in an error when they come to the result. Indeed, those secret connections are not yet well understood by any of us. We often see that the pretended and meddling encouragements of government, even on our own supposed good principles, do more harm than good.

They

They little know or suspect here, for example, that they cannot probably have even a good pair of shoes made in their country, without changing its government and religion.

Of Ferrol, and their marine department, I can say but little. We cannot examine nor inquire into these particulars, without giving umbrage. The natural curiosity of a traveller in this country, is often crushed in its infancy by a degree of jealousy in the government, not to be met with in any other nation in Europe. If you should be more fortunate, and, by proper recommendations, procure access to see and inquire, you will then discover that the following observations are founded.

In their public works as well as measures, they follow daily, more and more, the counsels of their new friends the French, whose absurdities, as usual, they heighten in their imitations. Most of the great public works in Spain have been, and  
will



will probably continue to be, subject to great changes and variations. The natural uncertainty of engineering, and the diversity of opinions among different and succeeding engineers, will probably cost this country fully as much as it has done most other nations.

Spain will have every thing too great, and can therefore finish nothing; her works, her defences, thus remain more imperfect, and she is less secure than if a mediocrity had been observed, better suited to her situation, funds, and abilities.

From what we can learn of her late marine regulations, some of them seem soon to threaten the extinction of all good ship-builders and sea-officers. The first are all to be land engineers, *à la Française*, formed by theory, without practice, and without ever handling a tool: so that they must probably have their education in France. The sea-officers are also to be formed chiefly by an education on shore.

The

The present Guardias Marinas (midshipmen) are mostly young men, full grown, who have never been at sea: and the few who have lately been sent thither, have kept their beds most part of the voyage. Of the three parts of a sea education, they have a chance of getting a part of one. Those three parts, I consider to be, first, The sea habits, and gaining a taste for the profession, which can only be secured by going early to sea; second, the practical knowledge and abilities; and third, the theory, of which last they may here gain a portion. Few, however, at any school, advance far in studies that are merely speculative, and when they do, they are but little advanced in their profession. In our way of formation to a sea life, if we miss one thing, we may gain another, and seldom entirely fail in the two first and most essential parts of a sea education.

Perhaps we ought so far to condescend to follow our neighbours, as to put a little  
more

more theory in our sea education. A good schoolmaster on board of each ship of war, seems to be one of the few essentials that requires to be more attended to. And perhaps, too, our sea-officers (who are not yet sufficiently military) should command the marines. These two regulations would tend to improve and increase three valuable sets of people, of singular importance to us, *viz.* sea-officers; schoolmasters, and marines.

They have had here, for several years; some good English instruments, to take the longitude of these capes, &c. procured by George Juan; but they have not been able to fix or use them. They shewed us, with some ostentation, a man who had been able, without teaching, to clean some of them. I saw, the other day, thirty-six oxen employed in drawing an eighteen-pounder gun. You may guess from thence the miserable breed of cattle here.

## L E T T E R VII.

*Of Travel and French Opinions. Spanish  
Dependence and Decline. Reflections.  
Dr. R——. Truth. Books.*

**T**HOSE who wish to know Spain and Spaniards, must first reside among them, to learn the language; then traverse the country, and make some stay at different places, which may be marked out. It will require full as much pains and fatigue to know it well, as many better countries. You must be prepared to put up with many inconveniences, with dirt, want, vermin, &c. but you have heard enough of those things, which are sometimes exaggerated by our pampered countrymen, and you are probably provided against the worst. Without the language, you can expect but little knowledge of this people, and less satisfaction. Their conversation will be the best part of your entertainment,

tertainment, and is far beyond what you might expect from a people so secluded and circumstanced as they are.

Do not always believe the French when they talk of Spain or Spaniards. They generally dislike and misrepresent them. They seem wilfully to misunderstand the meaning and character of this nation, and have no taste for their exquisite wit and humour, nor for their music, their mirth, or for their noble and beautiful language, all far superior to their own. Indeed, the French never arrive at speaking the Spanish, so as to have or give any idea of its true grace and energy.

This sensible people must surely have made greater advances in the common improvements that lately surround them, and must have more nearly kept pace with the rest of Europe, and particularly with France, since their close connection with that nation, if there had not been some political or Bourbon foul play, employed to prevent it: a proceeding founded, perhaps, on

F 2

that



that false policy of keeping them more dependent on France. The dependence of poverty and ignorance, however flattering to national vanity, can never be equally satisfactory, or beneficial, with the friendship of a rich, industrious, and well-informed nation.

Besides, those very means, this confined and insidious policy, by which they fancy the connection is secured, may be the very cause of breaking it. Any subordination between nations, or separate societies (which can so seldom be just to each other), cannot long be borne by the inferior, nor ever be lasting or secure. Even actual force cannot always secure it. There would be a degree of wisdom in some certain strokes of political generosity and justice, which might have effects as yet unknown in the political world. Nations would succeed much better by mutual assistance, than by trying to pull each other down. Although this connection between France and Spain seems now fixed for a long time to come, yet several things  
may

may be pushed too far, old antipathies revived, and effects produced that may tend to dissolve the connection when least expected: but I am sorry to see, that you do not seem in England, of late, to watch and understand those political matters. Foreign politics, I fear, is not your *fort*.

To search for the causes of the late general decline of Spain, and of the slow advances of every thing attempted to restore her, might be an instructive inquiry; but it would be like writing their history. There is probably as much to be learned from the fall as from the rise of nations, if nations could learn, or take example, from each other. Lessons might be found here applicable enough to other kingdoms; as there seems to be still the same tendency throughout the rest of Europe, from the modern rapacious spirit of commerce and gain, to follow the steps of Spain, and to grasp at trade and riches till they squeeze them to death. Deceitful peace succeeds commercial wars. What contradictions,

even in terms! Pedlars and plunderers seem to govern Europe by turns. Nations and individuals are equally fond of monopolies, which generally ruin them at last, and dislike all competition, which, nevertheless, does them infinite service. Both men and nations require competitors, or they would go to sleep, like the Spaniards.

You see I am naturally enough inclined to follow your advice, and indulge in general reflections, in search of truths of some importance, in which indeed I wish chiefly to deal. They may contain more novelty and originality, by my being, as it were, out of the world. Not that I have any great confidence in thoughts or systems fabricated in retirement, which may sometimes assist the fancy, but seldom the judgment. It requires the frequent collision of society, the freedom of conversation, and the kind offices of friendship, to purge and refine our speculations, and render them fit for use. I meant to give you some general ideas, supposing the particulars already sufficiently known, and set  
you

you some distant land-marks to guide your course, but not to save your steps. We may direct, but cannot much diminish your labour. Such is the inevitable condition of every human acquirement, and even of human existence: we must go through troubles that belong to both.

Churches, convents, palaces, have already been described by travellers, and I am glad to be relieved from the task. Among these, and a variety of other objects which excite attention in this country, you will often be struck with the strange mixture of good and bad taste,—of excellent with despicable things,—of finery with dirt and poverty. Any detail of their religious or superstitious ceremonies, I should think rather unworthy of your attention. Their influence on the people is of consequence, and I therefore wish you to be able to perceive and detect it. Their customs, amusements, visits, dress, food, &c. you will find in various travellers, as Clarke, Baretti, and others.



You are right to read Dr. R——, and others, on Spanish affairs, before you leave home. I sent for the book, got it on shore with difficulty, and am now reading it, on your recommendation. I like the Doctor much as a fine writer. One cannot help wishing he had seen and examined Spain and Spaniards, before he wrote about them ; as he has not, I think, always just ideas of their past, present, nor probable future condition, character, and progress. He takes some pains not to disoblige the Spaniards, and to forgive, or palliate, many of their most atrocious cruelties.

Some of the natives here, the best acquainted with their colonies and history, have confessed to me, that they think even the Abbé Raynal's book nearer the truth. Sacred truth, however graceful and elegant her form may be drawn, should, nevertheless, come naked, or at least not overdressed, adorned, and disguised, from the hands of the historian. From which class of writers are we to look for her ? I fear it is not always from the studies of the learned

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ed by profession, that we are to expect those bold outlines of truth that serve at once to instruct, to inspire and advance mankind. But how shall we know her by sight, especially if in full dress? We must labour in learning to read in her mirror, and to become acquainted with the outlines of those objects that are reflected in it.

You must beware of trusting too much to books, and to what is called learning, as well as of the ambition to become an author too soon yourself. But I think it is to be feared, that book-making may fall into a sort of discredit, and be too much despised by some who have gone the farthest in useful knowledge; who have, as it were, left books behind, and are not much inclined to write what they know, indolently leaving it to the professedly learned, to the designing or interested, to those of middling capacity, who have more patience, more vanity, or some sinister motives: some of these, encouraged by booksellers, stand ready

ready to snatch every subject out of the careless hands of genius and knowledge; and give it disfigured or incomplete to the world. As there are no great hopes from your project of rescuing authors out of the hands of the booksellers; the progress of learning and knowledge must still depend much on the conduct and information of those men. You should try, if possible, to give them a better education, by making it more common and easy; men of learning and of liberal minds might make a figure in that profession, and do infinite good.

When we shall have learned to think more and to write less, how many huge volumes may be contracted into a few pages! I think good abridgements of what is already written, would now be the most useful publications.

It is the duty of the present generation to curtail and arrange the ideas of the last. I shall be glad to join every assistance toward such a plan, in any of the ways  
you

you mention. Every little helps. You should think of encouraging your evening, your Sunday and day schools, and of increasing popular country lectures, and those itinerant philosophers, with their cart-loads of machinery; and likewise the literary societies in the country towns. They may all together be of some service to that yet ignorant country of ours, especially, if, at the same time, you can persuade our legislature to do something towards it,—something that should improve and increase the day-schools, abolish the boarding-schools, and promote useful knowledge: the shortest way to it must always be the best; and especially now, that the objects of study increase with civilization and improvements. It is high time for authors and teachers to steer by some north-west passage, directly to truth and science, and not lead us round by long and flowery ways, in which we lose so much time, and may never arrive at the end in view.

## L E T T E R VIII.

*Bowles. Manufactories. Pontz. History.  
Letters. Campomanes. Knowledge, and  
useful Arts.*

WHEN you come to Spain, make it in your way, if you can, to see Bowles. You will probably find him in his favourite province of Biscaya. You may have read his book. I believe it may be depended on, as far as it goes. This nation is not yet in a condition to profit by reading, nor can we believe that their government means they should, till we see other means employed, besides that of giving them books. But even these are distributed with a very sparing hand. The complete chain of useful knowledge, and the freedom of research, will probably long be excluded by inquisitorial tyranny. Where philosophers, and their books, are considered as dangerous, they can have few  
or

or no good effects ; and we should not be surpris'd to hear of Mr. B— being in the Inquisition for the pains he has already taken. I wish he was as well acquainted with his native country, England, as he seems to be with Spain and Germany.

It is rather surpris'ing to find him, and most of the writers of this country, always recommending manufactories to its inhabitants. Many of those manufactories are probably impracticable in its present state, except a few of the most simple kinds, as a proper beginning. One trade often requires a hundred others in order to carry it on ; of these half would not be found in the country, nor could be brought into it. They ought first to produce materials and hands, and perhaps should begin by encouraging the export of those very materials which they are always prohibiting, by which means they diminish the produce, the population, agriculture, and industry, of their country. I have heard that their minister, the Conde de Heranda, had some right ideas on these



these subjects; that he intended promoting, at first, a few simple staple fabrics, and only the produce of the raw materials in others. But you know he was not permitted to go on.

Bowles, you will perceive, evades treating much of the practice and actual state of the useful arts, and leaves it to Pontz, who hitherto confines himself mostly to the trifling remains of the fine arts; and having caught the rage of writing and describing, instead of giving drawings of every thing, as at first proposed, his volumes go on increasing, while the most important articles of information are not yet touched upon by either.

You are right in reading Mariana, his continuators, and others of their historians, though most of them are rather tedious and uninteresting; at least they may appear so, till you see the country. You will find most of them named in Antoni; Geddes, Clerke, Robertson, &c. But much of the information which you are collecting

collecting from books, and from me, I fear you will neither comprehend nor retain near so well as by acquiring it here on the spot.

Your letters of recommendation for Madrid, &c. are very proper and necessary in this country, though we have always found the circular letter and bills of Sir R. Herries and Co. to be quite sufficient for all the purposes both of credit and introduction, wherever we went; and have, in consequence, been treated with all the kindness and hospitality that almost any other letters could have procured\*. However, recommendations to great and learned men may likewise be of use; and that to Campomanes will answer several good purposes. You should first read his books. You will find him full of useful knowledge, though perhaps a little too much confined to reading and to French systems, and hence a little

\* As a convincing proof of the merits and utility of Sir Robert's plan, we find Messrs. Morland, Hamerley, and Co. have also adopted it.

deficient, like most men of learning of the present day, in practical knowledge; actual observation, and travel. But he can talk and write fluently, and to the purpose, on works, arts, and places, which he never saw. Though one of the best informed of their politicians, he is still attached to some of the old prejudices; as the necessity of strict prohibitions, and of making Spain a manufacturing country, almost before it is peopled and cultivated,—of watching and trimming the balance of trade, expecting government to regulate every thing, and enter into details for which the very best kinds are inadequate, and still more the worst. He supposes that public edicts, and economical societies, can reform, can people, and enrich the country, though they have had already sufficient experience of the inefficacy of all those methods. However, he improves as he writes. He seems candid and liberal enough to open his eyes by degrees, and his last publications are always the best. He has set his countrymen right in many essentials; and  
when

when he comes to read A. Smith, and see still more of the insufficiency of their present form of government, he may be convinced how little can be done or expected, without changing its constitution. We should not have expected to see him prepossessed with quite so many national prejudices; nor to find him so warm an apologist for the Spanish enormities, cruelties, and rapacity, in their American conquests. It is too late:—the facts are too well attested to be called in question now. Nor should we have supposed him subject to so many of their political errors,—as those of aiming at things incompatible,—at the character and effects, at once, of parsimony and of luxury,—of poverty and riches. They want the nation to be sober, temperate, economical, and at the same time, active and enterprising in pursuit of the objects of taste and pleasure; forgetting that arts and luxury must afford mutual assistance. But, notwithstanding all this, he has great merit, and is rather lost or misplaced

here; and he may yet have the honour of ending his days in the Inquisition which, in this country, is perhaps a test of the merit of a man, as burning is likely to be of a book. I hear he is one of the four already marked out by that tribunal for punishment, if it is found necessary to the establishment of their power, or to the exclusion of knowledge. He is here preaching in a wilderness. They do not understand him, in a country where they are yet doubting and debating whether exclusive companies be not the best mode of trading to their colonies. The people, willingly deceived by their assuming and inefficient government, vainly place their hopes in the operation of its edicts, instead of helping themselves. You may from thence conceive how far they are behind, and have yet to go.

I must differ from Dr. R——, and think that the low state of literature, taste, and knowledge here, appears from their authors being so indiscriminately admired



among them, and by their passing without criticism, whose lash they so often deserve. Though perused by few, besides the mere readers of this nation, one would expect that some country apothecary or tradesman might step forth, and tell these gentlemen, and the world, where they are wrong. It is but too plain, that a want of useful knowledge, and a certain indifference and negligence in the most important subjects, are now but too universally prevalent throughout this once celebrated country.

An inquiry was lately made, in two considerable towns in this province, for any one who could gauge some casks which were to be received in a contract for the king; but no such person could be found. Indeed, scientific merit of any kind could not now be easily produced or expected here, nor be of much use to the possessor. It would lead to nothing—but to the Inquisition.

The very few wants and conveniencies, the miserable appearance of the common people in this country, are very striking to one lately arrived from England. Their want of taste, and of variety of colour, even in their Sunday's dresses, which are mostly confined to brown and black, or to the natural colour of the wool, and the great numbers who are always in rags, render a crowd of these people at a fair or a holiday, a melancholy, instead of a cheerful sight, as with us. But I find no country people anywhere so well clothed as those in England; nor the useful arts, I think, anywhere so far advanced. This is not sufficiently known to other nations. A tour to our island might have been of service to several modern writers of the continent. On some subjects I always wish to know if the author has been in England, before I read his book. Perhaps the best way to improve the other nations, would be for their princes to travel, and particularly to visit and examine England.

## L E T T E R IX.

*Talents. Conversation. Trades. Improvements. Princes.*

ALMOST every country excels in some art, some talent or abilities, above others. I think the Spaniards can dance, sing, shave, and make chocolate, with any people in Europe; but I fear there are but few other of the useful or ornamental arts which they now possess to any degree of perfection. We must except speaking, which I had almost forgotten, and in which they certainly excel, by means of their fine language, which seems naturally to flow in a manner that invites the speaker to a kind of eloquence and urbanity.

We may partly, though not entirely, account for their conversation being so superior to their writing. The dread of the Inquisition prevents men of letters

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from trusting their ideas to paper ; it terrifies us all, hangs in our minds, and retards our pen as we write. I feel half afraid of it even here in my own room as I sit writing to you, and with some little dread and reluctance venture to set down the name.

The business of gilding, and that of printing, seem yet pretty well preserved and executed in Spain ; and one meets with an ingenious workman here and there ; but few other trades are supported and practised as they should be. Their *fomento*, as they call them, or regulations, societies, and premiums, for encouraging arts and industry, can never probably produce much good, though they have expended as much in that way as any nation. Perhaps they had better do nothing, as the surest way of doing no harm. Indeed, most governments, in their officious encouragement of such things, are often either like the fly on the wheel ; or retard more than they assist. They cannot always make men improve when and how they please. We must be left to ourselves, in the objects, in the  
choice,

choice, and measure of our exertions. Let us have but freedom and security enough, and we shall endeavour to better and improve our condition, and shall find out the way to do it more advantageously than can be pointed out to us by any superior power whatever.

Though it be difficult to change the character, or even to quicken the progress of such a people, yet a reflecting mind cannot help speculating sometimes, and thinking of the best way of going about it. Let us suppose then a young prince, heir to the crown, to travel, to fall into good hands, and to make all the progress in useful science, in the knowledge of men and things, that you and I can conceive: and then we may likewise suppose him to be equal to the chusing and preparing a set of proper and enlightened men for his future ministers, secretaries, professors, bishops, &c. and determined to make use of all the virtue and knowledge in his dominions, of whatever class or party, and to bring in more from abroad.



However parties may traduce each other, I cannot conceive any class of men in this age, to be totally useless or very dangerous. I believe all may be employed so as to produce the good of the whole, when they are properly placed. Even the timid or cruel bigot might be turned to something useful; though we might not chuse, for example, to employ him in a war against the Pope.

In short, I can conceive such a prince at length settled on the throne, and undertaking to reform his kingdom by degrees: to begin by abolishing the Inquisition at once, and then the friars gradually, one order at a time, or leaving for a while some of the most useful. Their rents might be advantageously applied to public uses, as to relieving the people from some of the most oppressive taxes in their respective provinces, in order to interest them in the cause, and get them on his side. He might have influence enough to oblige the Pope to acquiesce, and dispense with the monastic vows, or might pension

sion them for life, and dispose of them as has been done with the Jesuits.

He might then begin to admit of religious toleration, first in the sea-ports, and then extend it gradually to the most inland and improvable provinces, and to the colonies. Those would thence gradually become populous and industrious, and many advantages would soon appear, and gain the public opinion. Perhaps he might, in time, extend it to be a natural and complete toleration; by stopping gradually the funds that support the clergy, as they die off, leaving the people to pay and chuse their own teachers, all ideas of a state religion, or of intolerance, would soon be banished; or some seeds of this kind might be sown for the benefit of posterity. Nor need it at all be feared, that real religion would suffer by such a change: there has been already, in North America, experience enough to be convinced of the contrary. A just and equal government wants not the assistance of a superstitious religion: it is only tyranny and injustice  
that

that require such help, in order to terrify and subdue the people. It is evident that religion is necessary to man, and he will probably be most attached to that of his own choice.

We may then suppose our prince almost wise and liberal enough to see the destructive policy of maintaining distant colonies, and that he may be willing to settle them into separate kingdoms, having previously prepared them for it, and taught them by partial and gradual experiment, how to govern themselves. This would soon give them activity, industry, and self-importance; and each kingdom would then have as much of the other's commerce as would be necessary, and no more.

Sufficient freedom and security would render even Spaniards industrious. For I must suppose my prince capable of restoring them their constitution, and probably with improvements; giving them their ancient Cortes, but with a more equal and  
adequate

adequate representation. He would not then be jealous or afraid of the prosperity of his own people ; and would encourage the nobility to live on their estates, or to travel, and learn from other nations. He would likewise endeavour to reform the schools, and improve the education of his people, not suffering this task to be confined to the clergy, but entrusting it to some chosen men, who would teach more useful knowledge, with more beneficial habits and virtues. I will not detain you by enumerating what he might do.

Such a prince would be the father of his country, and such a dreaming speculator as you may have been supposing me to be, would think he could hardly fail of succeeding, at least in part. But when we come to ask how and where such a prince, and such ministers, could be found, or formed, in such a country, the vision vanishes, and we must be content to leave them as they are, perhaps for ages yet to come. All such innovations are probably impracticable under a Bourbon government, in which the lower classes remain so poor, debilitated,  
and

and dependent ; subjected to the church, and unwilling to be emancipated ; while the power of those who fancy themselves interested in their subjection, is not to be controlled ; while the government is too absolute, and therefore too indolent, to be forced, or inclined to take all the trouble necessary to the doing real good, or of being informed : and, in short, while they are the nominal possessors of the gold, and only the miners and factors for the rest of Europe.



## L E T T E R X.

*Government and Character of the French  
and Spaniards.*

I THINK most nations, except this, seem to have the species of government nearly suited to their character. How much the one is produced by the other, would be difficult to determine. Perhaps much of the character is derived from the government, and reciprocally they go on with a kind of mutual influence, gradually wearing into a fitness for each other.

The inhabitants of France and those of Spain, so opposite in disposition, probably require different kinds of government, but they are now nearly of the same kind; and hence we may conclude one of them to be wrong, which is probably that of Spain. The French inconstancy, heat, impetuosity, and the Spanish steady patience, natural pride

pride and indolence, must require different treatment. Different soils and situations must have different culture to make them productive. These two nations can never find much to borrow from, or to like in, each other. They seem originally intended to be enemies; and if left to themselves, the leading principles of their governments would probably be as opposite as their taste and character.

The character of the French,—their peculiar humours, fire, and caprice, perhaps render them unfit to be trusted with that degree of liberty, which to other nations seems necessary. Unable to judge of oppression or injustice but from fancy or fashion, they must, perhaps, be guided and restrained by a despotic hand. And so long as that can be considered as the hand of a father, and despotism can conceal its character under the cloak of amiable and liberal manners and sentiments; while an open and amicable intercourse is kept up between sovereign and people by proper *media*, it may long go on smoothly, and even sometimes with  
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a degree of prosperity far beyond what could have been expected; but we have now probably seen its limits, or *maximum* of success, and may prophesy that it cannot go much farther. Though the prince acknowledge himself tied by no constitutional bonds, these are partly, though precariously, supplied by his attention to the national prejudices and public opinion, to the advices and remonstrances of his own tribunals, which, though originally instituted to enlarge his authority, have gradually assumed a kind of right to control his edicts, and almost to represent the nation, or at least to deceive it.

But the Spanish character seems to require and deserve a government of freedom and security, as a necessary incitement to the good and proper remedy for its bad qualities. It would be requisite for the exercise of their natural good sense, of their rational and meditative turn of mind, and their other powerful and distinguishing qualities, as pride, honour, firmness, magnanimity, which we know they possess, when

when excited by sufficient motives. It would likewise serve as a cure to their indolence,—to their false notions of honour and religion. But all the modern changes in their government have had a contrary course and tendency.

By perusing their history, you will trace some of the causes and the progress of their grandeur and of their decline. The union of several kingdoms under one wise head (Ferdinand) suddenly formed a great power, invigorated by the ferment of liberty, and the natural operations of their then free, though complicated and imperfect systems of government. Their internal and Moorish wars,—their discovery of the new world,—their accession to Austria, produced great objects of national exertion. Distant wars, conquest, defence, discovery, commerce, all conspired to call forth the most powerful public and individual efforts, and to make them really great. But national greatness knows no bounds. It generally at last overshoots them all, and exhausts itself. Then the invasion of  
their

their rights by Charles V. and the final destruction of their constitution by his successors, became more than sufficient to overbalance and bear down all the advantages of their acquisitions: and the baneful effects of overstrained efforts, of mistaken policy, and of despotism, soon began to appear. The nation, as it became, by the loss of its liberties, less able to bear additional weights, was, as usually happens more heavily loaded, and soon exhausted, by the ambitious, and then uncontrollable pursuits of its princes. Its operations abroad became more languid, while at home the national character degenerated; till, by the help of other unfavourable incidents, it sunk at last into a dependence on that very power with whom it formerly contended with success.

As the nation had neither spirit, force, nor wisdom enough left, to chuse a king and government of its own on the death of Charles II. the Spaniards are obliged to submit to be governed by the arbitrary systems of Bourbon politics, in which



the interest of the country does not form even a part. They have already paid severely for that connection, were it only by the wars into which it has led them, in which they had no real interest, and for which they were totally unfit and unequal, after being so irrecoverably debilitated. How different their situation from that of former periods, when they could make all their foreign connections act subservient to their own views; and when the council of Vienna was well known to be only the minister of that of Madrid.

Whatever apparent or pretended improvements have been introduced by the Bourbon government, have certainly not been in favour of freedom, nor of the ancient constitution; nor has the increase of forms, councils, or subdivisions, tended to facilitate, but rather to embarrass and retard the public business, and to compose a complex system of tyranny, which removes almost every object that could excite great talents or industry, or that could raise such minds to great or noble actions.

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From these facts, and their numerous consequences, — the negligence and corruption of people in public office, the impossibility of redress for any person they may chuse to oppress; and the want of legal or constitutional intercourse between the sovereign and the people; — we cannot expect to find in this nation any great or continued efforts of public spirit to stem the torrent of national corruption. Their government naturally produces a despondency in all, and more especially in the lower and most important classes of people. In short, their new government seems only intent on converting them entirely into Frenchmen, which they never will be, and on subduing the remaining magnanimity, and other virtues left in their character; in which it may succeed by time, insidious policy, and artificial systems of oppression. Seeing them now become slaves to superstition and arbitrary power; their former character and spirit enervated and subdued; the poverty and desolation of the country; and comparing former periods with the present, the effects of

their ancient constitution with those of its abolition, we may not hesitate to conclude that their native temper and genius are incompatible with a despotic authority, and cannot appear while under such oppression. Nothing less than civil and religious liberty can restore their character, and re-people their now naked and arid plains.

Your ideas of the Spanish character are not, I believe, so wrong as those of many others. I cannot pretend to estimate for you, how much they have lost of their ancient character, nor decide between the real merits of their old cavalier, and their modern fine gentleman ; we have natural prepossessions in favour of the old, and must fear that they have lost, by the decline of chivalry, some of those high notions of honour, without obtaining always the advantages of our modern refinements of sentiment, which, when seasoned with good sense, come in sometimes tolerably well to supply the place of that old enthusiasm of honour. They must excuse us, if we doubt their having gained by this change ; and if we likewise doubt

doubt their claim to a superiority in manners, or in pleasure, while they affect to laugh at the rigid notions of their ancestors, and consider pleasure as consisting in unrestrained and unrefined indulgence.

Their military and political talents were, for a long time, confessedly the first in the world, and were not, perhaps, outdone by the Romans themselves in their best times. And though they are now fallen even lower than the world imagines, yet I would not advise any nation to treat them with much real contempt, nor think that they can therefore be easily defeated or easily managed. Their councils still retain much of their former obstinacy, and of that impenetrable mystery for which they were always remarkable; and their troops, though now few, and not well formed, yet by some good officers, and a few campaigns, might perhaps be rendered again invincible.

Some sensible Swift, about the time of the latter Philips, writes, “ Qu’ ils se roi-

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“ diffient contre le mauvais succès, et ne  
“ reposent jamais moins qu’ apres avoir  
“ travaillé avec succès. Que leur âme est  
“ vaste, d’un courage a qui les difficultés  
“ n’apportent point de degout ni le tems  
“ de lassitude.” You know Charles V.  
used to say, “ Time and I against any  
“ other two.” Our Swiss elsewhere ob-  
serves, “ Que l’Espagnole est superieur a  
“ tous les menaces ou promesses. D’un  
“ temperament propre a tous les fonctions  
“ de l’âme ; par la profondeur de ses pen-  
“ sées il embrasse toute l’étendue de l’ob-  
“ jet qu’il se propose ; il en voit toutes les  
“ parties. Mais quelquefois le moment  
“ de l’execution passe pendant qu’il deli-  
“ bere: mais ce malheur ne lui arrive  
“ guere dans le cabinet ou a la negociation,  
“ ou son esprit arrete et fixe, il ait moyen  
“ de faire paroître plus adroitement la  
“ force, et la delicateffe de ses ressorts qui  
“ l’assurent du succès de tout ce qu’il peût  
“ lors manier avec loisir et sans être pressé.  
“ La lenteur Espagnole quoiqu’ elle bronche  
“ quelque fois pour vouloir asseoir le pied  
“ trop surement, est accompagné d’une



“ constance extraordinaire dans le malheur,  
“ et d’une perseverance sans relache, d’une  
“ vigueur infatigable a poursuivre leurs avan-  
“ tages. Si tous les arts lui manquent elle  
“ a recours aux traités et aux conferences,  
“ et elle en tire d’une façon ou d’autre, le  
“ fruit qu’ elle en pouvoit attendre. Ainsi  
“ Dieu, pour maintenir en un point presqu’  
“ egal la valeur des deux nations (Francoise  
“ et Espagnole), a opposé à la vivacité et  
“ au grand esprit de l’une, la prudence, et  
“ la fermeté de l’autre, a fin que ce qui  
“ manque a celle-ci de promptitude soit re-  
“ compense par son attention a tout ce qu’  
“ elle fait.” Their efforts, during their  
fall, and after many signal losses, deserve  
admiration; and the extent of their  
decline was not perceived till long after it  
had happened. Our Swiss observes, “ Que  
“ leur chaleur lente et naturelle qui agit  
“ sans precipitation, et qui souffre sans al-  
“ teration ce qu’ elle ne peut resoudre pour  
“ le donner à guerir au tems.” This fire  
was long respected and dreaded after it was  
extinct; the world continued afraid of  
its mere ashes. The political world is sub-

ject to habits and prepossessions like individuals, and the dread of a power once formidable, we see subsist after its decline, and after the causes of dread have ceased.

## L E T T E R   X I.

*Travellers. Galicia. Lands. Taxes. Law.  
Women.*

To Mr. F——.

Coruña.

THE complaint is, I believe, rather general, that Spain is little known: but this must proceed more from want of readers than of writers; for, upon enquiry, you will find that much has been written on the subject. It may be true, that such writers are less read or known than those of other countries; that writings are insufficient to furnish the ideas generally expected from them; and that this peninsula, lying out of the common tracts of communication, is therefore less visited: but those few visitors, I think, generally write; and though the country does not perhaps furnish more matter than some others,

others, if many more were to travel thither, each might still find something new to observe.

Nations cannot be too much acquainted or connected with each other: the good effects are obvious from history and experience, and seem to be nearly in proportion to the closeness and intimacy of those connections. You see how quickly our island has improved since the union. Nations freely opening their ports and commerce, their laws and improvements, to each other, will be the most indubitable proofs of the real improvement of the world.

This corner of the peninsula lies even more out of the common tract than the rest of it, and is therefore still less known: but it is the province of the most importance to Spain, except perhaps Catalonia. It contains about 1000 or 1200 square leagues, and they say, about one million and a half of inhabitants; but suppose it only one million, it is no bad population,

pulation, and far beyond the rest of Spain. As foldiers, I believe they are superior to most of the other Spaniards at present, when their extreme frugality is not carried too far towards *starvation*; for even some of their young people seem half starved; so much that I should doubt if even care and good living, or any thing, could make good and spirited foldiers of them. Contrary to the rest of Spain, most of their little farms and possessions are too small, and the possessors too poor to improve them: however, the mode of tenure, *los foros*, like our copyholds, is preferable, and it would be much better for Spain were it general throughout, especially if they could exclude the inconvenience of subtenants, too frequent here, as in Scotland and Ireland.

The reasons gradually appear, why the produce of this province does not increase with the increase of money and demand. Above one-third of the lands belong to the church, and perhaps one-fifth of the produce of the rest goes the same way in



tithes and devotional donations. Two-thirds of the lands are entailed upon a few *mayorazgos*, or belong to those who are too poor to cultivate with advantage: now it is obvious, that few of these three classes will improve their lands, or bestow any expence upon them above what is absolutely necessary; their *aforados* certainly cannot, and still less their subtenants; a very few only among the smaller *mayorazgos*, who are obliged, from poverty, to live at home, and some creoles when they can find any land to buy, which is very seldom, can ever be expected to improve their estates: money, in other hands, can be of little service to the country, as little or no land can come to market; and people will not risk their capitals in any schemes of manufacture or great improvement under such a government.

As to the taxes here, though this province has compounded with government for some of the most oppressive, the remainder are found to be very distressing; which is also aggravated by the rigorous  
and

and often arbitrary manner of levying all duties in this country, and by the habitual corruption and dishonesty of those employed not only in that department, but indeed in almost every public employment: perhaps it must be so, where there is no system of control from the representatives of the people. But they are, nevertheless, quite embarrassed in this province with numberless laws and regulations, and hence with eternal law-suits. We may here see how conceited and officious legislators, even with good intentions, may *regulate* away all the powers and desires of men to improve: the people will only do it in their own way; when forced into any other, they will probably soon neglect it. Such seems to have been the progressive decay of industry in these countries.

The poor ragged *gallegos* are, however, rather industrious in their ignorant and coarse way. They are frugal to a degree of misery, and especially the women: who  
likewise

likewise perform the hardest labour in the fields, as frequently as the men, or more so. They drive the cart, they plow, and carry the manure where it is to be had, often in their arms, spreading it with their hands instead of a dung-fork.

The civilization of almost every country might be measured by the respect shown and employment allotted the female part of society: in savage life, the women are held in the most laborious and abject state of bondage; and in the highest state of civilization, they seem to govern the world: in the one, they labour and carry burdens for their tyrants the men; and in the other, they sit still and direct them as their humble slaves; and in that situation, are very apt, like all human beings, to indulge in pernicious delicacy and idleness, which lead, by degrees, to noxious vices and depravity: or rather, we men indulge them, and do all we can to spoil their natural, active, and useful dispositions, and are the real authors of all that debility and  
corrup-

corruption of manners for which they are so often blamed. But even in the most dissolute state of society, women do not often break loose entirely, nor go so far in vice as the men, but often serve as some restraint to keep them within bounds. A wise government would endeavour at some just medium between those extremes: that medium will be found to consist, I believe, in the most perfect equality that is practicable between the sexes, in the enjoyment of personal rights, eminence, education; and the approaches to that equality may serve as indications of perfection in society and government.

## L E T T E R XII.

*Chimneys. Windows. Trees. Theft.  
Religion.*

**T**RIFLES often become of consequence, according to circumstances, and may serve, as well as more important things, to shew the character and state of a nation. The want of chimnies in this country, which is mountainous, and sometimes very cold, is not a little distressing to us in our family way of living; and thence you may guess how little they are advanced in the conveniencies or luxuries of life. We have been obliged to build a kind of a chimney in a corner, but it cost us great trouble to get the workmen to comprehend and execute the work: many of the inhabitants come now on purpose to see it. In some of their towns, it is but of late that the boys and populace have  
left



left off breaking the glass windows whenever any body ventured to use them: in other places, they have destroyed all the trees and statues of the public walks. Hence we see how difficult it is to improve the savage man, or to entice him even into common decency and cleanliness. It has cost a great deal of trouble and opposition from the people in Madrid, to admit the late improvements in the police and comforts of their town, and from their general aversion to cleanliness, to prevent their dirtying the streets from wantonness and bad habits.

I believe that which contributes most to put us out of humour at times with these miserable gallegos, is their pilfering so frequently every thing from our house and garden; and we can hardly find any body here who has our sense of the meanness and turpitude of this thievish disposition. Their neighbours, the Portuguese, are still greater thieves if possible. One would think the lower classes in these countries all accomplices, or that tacitly ap-  
 VOL. II. I proving

proving of theft, they were determined to keep one another in countenance. It is so common, that nobody seems very much ashamed of it;—or of a gaol, which is scarcely considered a punishment. Though their prisons are shocking nauseous dungeons, their own houses and way of life are so little better, that they seem to live in them with as little shame and regret as at home. Such are the subjects of arbitrary governments. The usual and most approved remedy here for recovering stolen goods is, by applying to the father Confessor, who often succeeds, and brings them to you, on condition of no questions being asked, and no farther discovery being made.

It is a bad wind that blows no good. We must take the good with the bad in all human institutions, be thankful, and not condemn the whole because a part is imperfect. It seems fortunate that, even in the worst regulated societies, there are still some who have an influence on the minds of the worst of the people. But  
when

when government permitted so much political influence to an exclusive religion, they gave themselves a master with whom they could never afterwards contend. The sacred seal of confession was admirably contrived to complete the system of church power and influence. I am often, on reflection, astonished at the success of the Protestant reformation, against such an artful and well established power. It would have been impossible, if the Inquisition had been then completely established throughout Christendom. Reason and philosophy would probably always have been cold and feeble opponents to ecclesiastical authority. Nothing but its own arms could have been successful against it. One enthusiasm may sometimes be effectually opposed to another, but nothing else; and the new, while young and vigorous, will often beat the old and established. Hence, you may be sure, we have not yet done with religious revolution.

But this pretended remedy for theft, and other crimes, is plainly calculated to promote

mote the power of Holy Church, and is very fit for the purpose. It operates as a palliative for present relief, and tends to encourage and maintain, more than to extirpate or diminish, the source of the evil, which will therefore long continue to bring grief to the church mill.

## L E T T E R XIII.

*Reflections on Home, on Finance, &c.*

I N almost any country, we may be as happy as our nature admits, if we are once determined to make the best of it: but in few countries it is possible to form this determination, and in fewer still can we keep it. A longing desire after *home* haunts us every where. The pursuit of some decided plan may produce exertions that employ and fill up the mind, as well in one place as another. But those who, as you say, pretend to make no difference between places, and to be always equally happy in all, must either want feeling, taste, or veracity; or they must have acquired a degree of stoical apathy which I do not understand. With me, I must confess a great partiality and affection for every thing belonging to our



native land seems to increase with time and distance, to a degree which you cannot at home feel or conceive. The sight of every English face is a treat to me.

We are not always aware of the motives that influence or produce our actions and opinions. In such a disposition of mind, I am perhaps too often in the humour to curse this dirty country, and to doubt whether any thing in it be worth writing to you about. I then recall my thoughts from home, look round, and find that the knowledge of error and superstition, the effects of tyranny, civil and religious, are of consequence, though generally considered as common-place, and charitably overlooked by most travellers. You know my opinion, that more important lessons are frequently to be drawn from the errors than from the knowledge of others.

So far from despising the natural versatility of mind given to man, he ought rather to rejoice, that he is capable of such easy transitions,  
from

from painful anxiety and vexation, to ease and tranquillity; that he can so soon be reconciled to his situation, and forget his misfortunes; and that the wretch of to-day, may be happy to-morrow, without any change of outward circumstances. So soon as we have recovered that inestimable blessing, good humour, we see with different eyes; objects change their appearance and hue. I can then very well agree with your speculative friend, and admit that there must be something worth observing every where, and that even the poor nasty people who now surround us, may excite the attention of a philosopher. I am, however, so far recovered from the vexation of our late robberies, and some other ill usage, that I find myself again beginning to be amused with trifles. We are just going to St. Jago, the capital of the province and of their superstition, where we may contemplate the power of the church, the dissolute manners of her sons, or hear some of her good music.

But you wished for information concerning Spanish finance. You will find accounts of it already published, sufficiently correct for your purpose; so that I shall only give you some general ideas and reflections.

Their whole system then of taxation, or finance, is, in my opinion, a collection of abuses founded on ignorance and oppression; so much so, that all attempts to improve the country will be vain, till they have changed the whole plan and principles of their finance, as well as of their policy and religion. But their ignorance of the true principles of national revenue and prosperity leads me to think, that if they could be brought to change, it would be for the worse. They have talked of that French chimera, the *droit unique*, which they might be romantic enough to adopt, find themselves disappointed, then return to their old methods of taxation, and never discover all the while that both were fallacious.

Their

Their taxes, like many other of their customs and regulations, are either of Moorish origin, derived from the most oppressive feudal times, or built upon the worst of modern principles. You will find, that the chief part of the revenue arises, 1st, From the *milliones*, which is a tax on several sorts of provisions, and the necessaries of life: 2dly, From the *duana* or customs: 3dly, The *siete rentillas*: 4thly, From the salt: 5thly, From the bullion arising from the mines, when imported, and when exported; and 6thly, From the tobacco, the collection of which tax alone is said to employ above 70,000 people. But the most oppressive, though far from the most productive, of all their taxes is, the *Alcavala*: which is an impost of from ten to fourteen *per cent.* on every sale of almost every thing; so that five or six sales double the price. By this they have banished trade and manufactures from their country. They lost the United Provinces by endeavouring to force this tax on them, after the measure of oppression was full. They now know it to be quite sufficient

sufficient of itself to ruin the country, and keep down the commerce and industry of any nation; we may therefore suppose it is continued for that purpose. The whole ordinary revenue is supposed to amount to about four millions sterling, and I believe cannot be much increased; a circumstance replete with many important and mischievous consequences.

What you formerly observed is *à-propos* to our subject, and should not be lost, viz. That the natural progression of industry has not only, almost every where, been obstructed by the careless rapacity of governments, but often by the very regulations officiously meant to promote it; one species of industry has been encouraged to the ruin of others more useful; every step they took tended to curtail natural liberty without any equivalent advantage. Such have been most of the laws establishing corporations and monopolies, and regulating apprenticeships; taxes on work, workmen, sales, and returns, on exports  
and



and imports, &c. by which all the circulation has been led through a channel where it could not have the most advantageous effects, the revenue of the state. By their foolish and selfish systems of balance of trade, every nation has endeavoured to impoverish its neighbours, as if with a view to prevent their becoming happy and industrious, and thereby profitable customers: considering money as real riches, though only a very equivocal sign of them, they are cutting down the tree to get at the fruit.

Most of these false principles and prejudices still exist here in their *full vigour*; nay, many of them originated and spread from hence, when this was a leading nation in Europe; and their grasping, selfish plans of commerce and colonization have been but too much imitated by other nations.

After all, considering the expence attending modern governments, and the present state of most countries, the best remedy is but a bad one, viz. A little more  
skill

skill and artifice in laying and levying the taxes, which not only must still exist, but are thence increased; and the freest and richest governments are thus tempted to go as much too far as the poorest despot. The two grand objects to be attended to, are first to enrich the people, and then to lay the taxes equally: but, alas! how few men or ministers are capable of either!

## L E T T E R   XIV.

*Andalusia. Cadiz. Trade to the Colonies,  
Laws of Ports.*

To Mr. T.

I MEAN now to give you a short account of a long journey, from one extremity of Spain to the other; from Gibraltar, by way of Madrid, to Corunna, which you may find interrupted by occasional reflections, *a l'ordinaire*. Your favourite province of Andalusia may often prove the most interesting part of a journey through Spain, both on account of the peculiar humour, dialect, wit, and urbanity of its inhabitants, and (provided you have only Spanish ideas of riches and plenty) on account of the comparative affluence of the country. But to an Englishman, if we except the few rich plains

plains on the Guadalquivir, and some other smaller rivers that run into it, the whole province has but a barren and naked appearance. Leaving the usual tracts, we sometimes crossed wild and desert hills, inhabited by shepherds who had nothing to offer us but *gaspacho*, or bread and water seasoned with a little pepper and oil. Throughout the greatest part of the province, I could have fancied myself travelling between the far separated Moorish villages, consisting of a few wretched huts, thinly scattered among the mountains.

In the corn lands, the incredibly large tracts belonging to every *cortijo*, or cottage, are badly cultivated, as may easily be imagined from their too great extent; and excepting in the two German colonies, the same appearance of rags and poverty is to be met with, that strikes the traveller in the interior parts of Spain. The cultivation of oil seems to be profitable, as the appearance

ance of their grounds, works, and mills, sufficiently indicate.

*Cadiz* deserves our first notice, both on account of its opulence and important situation. You may presently perceive here a more liberal way of thinking, a character even of luxury and vice, different from the rest of the nation. More cheerful manners, more confidence, credit, and sociability among men, who are not, as in other parts, kept asunder by a melancholy and distrustful poverty; soured by pride and oppression, rendered diffident and indifferent about each other, and about almost every thing.

Wherever the people of different nations are well settled and mixed, I think the human species improves, and a race is produced superior to either side of the original stock. Nature seems, by every means, to invite the people of different countries and climates to associate, to assist and improve each other; a disposition which their foolish and malignant governments are always endeavouring to control. The

4 personal



personal improvements of the people here, especially of the middling and better sort, I think is obvious, and has been progressive even within my memory.

This is now almost the only thriving place in Spain, and its trade is said to have increased of late a million of dollars annually. But to me it is a matter of doubt, whether the riches of this town are advantageous to the nation. The trade to the colonies, which is entirely confined to this port, throws all the riches and luxury of the kingdom into one part, while the rest is starved. The country is equally drained of its inhabitants, by their flocking to the new world, to which their idleness and poverty have taught them to turn their hopes and attention, instead of minding their business, and endeavouring to acquire that ease and comfort at home, which they in vain seek in new Spain.

Some of these evils seem to have engaged the attention of government; and as a remedy, the commerce of this port is intended

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tended to be divided between thirteen more : but I doubt the remedy will be ineffectual, or produce other evils. The *wife ones* suppose, that by this division more money, and a greater portion of the freights and profits of their trade, will remain in the country : so much the worse. The Spaniards attempt more business than they have capital or hands to manage well ; the nation has hitherto furnished little else to its own trade, than a place of rendezvous and deposit for strangers ; yet, even from this, there remains more money in the country than does it good. The abundance of money in Spain has had the most pernicious effects ; as it has increased, every thing else is become dear and scarce, industry has diminished, and manufactures have disappeared ; so that Montesquieu's questions are now sufficiently answered by experience, viz. " Whether " money, in too great abundance, will not " *always* have the effects it has had in " Spain ?" And, " Whether the money " trade with its colonies can ever be beneficial to that country ?"

While this is the case, extending a system in which the evils predominate, can hardly prove a remedy, but the contrary. Those evils will be extended and increased, and may still overpower the advantages. Various abuses and frauds will multiply with the occasions, with the increase of offices and of money, and with the drain of people.

I know of no sufficient remedy for this, excepting religious toleration, and the encouragement of strangers; nor of any power that could repeople and restore their country, without a free and gradual admission of foreigners; but then this would change their whole system of government, religion, and commerce, which is too much to be expected or attempted at once. Unfortunately for them, even their learned and wise men still retain much of the vulgar jealousy of admitting strangers to settle and grow rich in their country, which is just what they want most.

The Spaniards, or their creoles, are by no means bad masters; on the contrary,  
they

they are perhaps too indulgent, so that their slaves and domestics become idle and indolent. The defect is not in the individuals, but in the constitution of their government, which is certainly not framed so as to reform itself: that can only be done by a very great prince, by a Lycurgus, a political hero, such as modern times do not produce; one who could relinquish half his own power, and who should know every thing.

It would almost require a miracle to open their eyes; and till that is done, there is but little hope of their opening their trade, or of their relinquishing their oppressive systems of duties and restraints, so as to make it profitable enough for individuals to supply each other across the Atlantic with bulky goods and materials, which is almost the only kind of commerce beneficial to a country, leaving all the various trades and manufactories to find their own places, and to balance themselves; and there is still less hope of their opening their ports or colonies to foreigners, and of their entering into some competi-

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tion

tion with other nations, though the only way to awaken industry; nor is there much hope of their soon procuring or perceiving the right form of government, on which all this depends: we are sorry to find that even Campomanes seems hardly sensible of these great leading principles of trade and national prosperity; and as to the rest of the nation, they are yet disputing whether the barbarous and monopolizing mode of exclusive companies be not the best way of trading to their own colonies. You may consider how far they are behind, and have yet to go.

But I am forgetting some other remarks I had to make on this place. The sea will probably in time work its way through it, near the part where the new cathedral stands, unless they construct better works for breaking the force of the waters, and slope the banks properly, like those of the Dutch for such purposes. And this cathedral will probably never be finished, for another reason: the funds, or taxes, allotted for the work, are to continue till it shall



shall be completed, which the managers will therefore find means always to postpone\*.

The public is easily cheated in such countries, and there is nobody to take its part here, except sometimes the king: but even he has seldom power sufficient to do it effectually. Any imposition or abuse, once established on the firm basis of the interest of any powerful body of men, becomes thence almost immovable.

In every sea-port perhaps in the world, there are some customary mitigations of the duties payable to the state. This, from bribery and connivance, is often gradually carried to extremes. Here, from the exorbitant and ill-judged impositions on merchandize, ordered by a government, constitutionally ignorant and careless, all parties, by a kind of mutual consent, had agreed in making this allowance very considerable; insomuch that not above half the imposed duties were probably levied, which was more for the advantage

\* The *Duomo* at Milan has been building these thousand years, and is not yet finished, perhaps for the same reasons.

of the trade and of the crown, than if the whole had been taken. In no country was there ever a better understanding between the executive officers of government and the men of business: indeed, without it, business could not perhaps be carried on at all. A new and rigid administrator here, nevertheless, insists on levying the whole of the duties as ordered by the state. This is said to be impossible: however, he goes on in the rigid execution of his impracticable project; and we had the mortification to see some of his bonfires of fine English goods, great quantities of which he has lately caused to be seized and burnt according to their laws, for not having paid all those impracticable impositions\*. Indeed, the duties should now be lowered, for several reasons common to all trade, and for some, peculiar to this country. In their new ports, trade will otherwise meet with insurmountable obstructions; and their subjects at home should, at least,

\* It was, however, soon found necessary to remove this administrator.

be put on a footing with their colonists, who have been much favoured of late.

Men, when left to themselves, will often fall into methods or expedients best suited to their own situation: mitigating or evading bad laws by common consent, we frequently see practised in many other parts of the world; which, on the whole, is certainly better than a strict observance of them, let the lawyers say what they will. When a law is commonly evaded, it is a sign of its being a bad one; and such evasion becoming general, indicates a defective legislature more strongly perhaps than a corrupted people. The general dread and abhorrence of the laws, and of all who are concerned in their execution, so remarkable in this country, shew that something must be amiss. The people must have some reason to fear injustice, from the nature or administration of those laws. We should not be surpris'd to find their minds and opinions depraved and erroneous, when either to follow or to oppose their natural guides and criterion, church and state, may equally lead them wrong.

## L E T T E R XV.

*Virtue, public and private. Reformers.  
Abuses. Mysteries. Government.*

To Mr. A. J.

Cadix.

THE general complaint, that the world degenerates, cannot always be just. Yet in the progress of civilization we may conceive it to decline in morals, as it improves in arts and sciences. Public and private virtue seem now to be different, and do not necessarily exist together. A man, without losing his good name, may commit acts to cheat government, the public, or the people, which were he to attempt on a friend would eternally disgrace him. These distinctions are very striking here. We find many honourable and valuable private characters, but few of them in public employ; perhaps, when once in office,

office, they are either obliged to go with the tide, or in some degree are necessarily corrupted by the very nature of power. I think we have seldom found many of our friends, or even ourselves, remain quite the same after preferment as before. When public virtue is not in fashion, private integrity will hardly stem the tide of corruption. Most modern reformers are a kind of conceited and partial little *reformatori di stato*, who do more harm than good, like this Cadix administrator, whose small part, taken differently from the rest, serves only more to disconcert the whole; they generally distress rather than reform, and interrupt more than they forward: an interruption in one part of the public business may affect the whole.

It requires great wisdom, as well as dexterity, to mend any of the wheels of society. You cannot stop the machine, but must watch and follow its motions, so as to repair it by gentle means,—by general laws which may gradually and  
quietly



quietly execute themselves. The young and precipitate are apt to fancy every improvement practicable, even without watching proper occasions, which occur but rarely. They fancy that truth, science, and sound principles, can do every thing, and must always prevail with mankind, without considering their character, and the condition of society. This is rather a respectable error. Bold and precipitate reformers are sometimes necessary and successful on certain great and difficult occasions.

The roots of most established abuses lie deep. Lopping off branches is doing nothing, for others will spring from the same stem. Sometimes the whole stem must be rooted up, and another planted. But such violent innovations are not to be effected in times of tranquillity, or they would cost more than the value, in different kinds of destruction, in undeserved sufferings and derangements. Such a reform must begin at the head, the source of all government.

Countries

Countries so loaded with political evils as this, invite the mind to political speculation. Here we can study bad government, and trace the whole chain of its pernicious effects; no unprofitable study, if properly pursued and applied. We may see how one false principle produces innumerable evils not to be foreseen by human wisdom; how one abuse opens the door to many others. They hang as necessarily together as a string of lies; and an erroneous system once established seems immovable, as so many are interested in supporting its abuses; and hence even the worst systems of government find many advocates.

Arts and society cannot advance with proper celerity, till mystery is banished from every art and subject. Knowledge must be simplified and laid open to public investigation, when falsity and nonsense will be readily distinguished from truth and science, and gradually abandoned as useless. We may then work in open day, and depend on mutual assistance and forbearance, more than on any arts of deceiving each other.

We

We must suppose men a little better than they are, in order to make them so. Treat them with confidence, and they will endeavour to deserve it.

But I find I have been led on from one thing to another, to fill up my letter with speculations, so that it may now seem tedious to exemplify my doctrine, as I intended, by the affairs and cases here that suggested these reflections, and to which they apply. Bad governments are full of useful lessons and instruction; but bystanders principally see the game. The natives, happily perhaps for them, discover little of it, and seldom perceive the extent of their own depression, or the depth of their fall.

The art or science of legislation has made but little progress in those countries where the Roman laws have been adopted. That which is borrowed is not probably so proper for us, or so capable of improvement, as that which grows up indigenous in the country. Better make new, or mend the old, than borrow what  
does

does not fit us, unless we first cut it; so as to make it fit. There is hardly a legislature now in the world that deserves the title, except our own; nor any other that is forced to attend to the interests of all ranks and classes of people.

The practice of the law is almost every where else defective or tyrannical, either under or over the mark. You know their secret and unfair modes of examination, and that here every judge seems a severe and inexorable tyrant, rather than a tender, humane, and benevolent friend to mercy, and to the prisoners, which he appears to be in our courts of law; and yet I believe our courts dispatch more business, and do more rigid justice.

I might, perhaps, tell you more of their laws, but must confess my inability and want of time for that, and several other points that I could wish to attend to: each would require a particular study and enquiry, and life is too short for them all. The chief laws are, 1. *Los del fuero*

*fuero jufgo*, compiled in the times of their Gothic kings, from old ufages, and partly from the Theodofian code, orders of kings and councils, &c. 2. *Las de fiete partidas*, collected by Frederick III. and published by his fon Alphonfo X. the aftronomer. 3. *Las leyes de Tozo*, on criminal matters, mayoralsgos, &c. The popes have taken advantage of their confufion, as ufual, to extend the papal jurifdiction: though there appears, of late, fome difpofition in government to reftrain their power. I believe you will not find thefe, nor many other laws, to be much better for being old: nor do many of their more modern edicts and pragmatics fhew any great progrefs of improvement in legiflation: but I know not enough of the fubject to be particular, or decided.

Nations in general are too much bound by antiquity, and attached to old cuftoms, to improve rapidly. There muft, doubtlefs, be fixed principles in every conftitution of government that deferves the name: but thefe principles, once difcovered, fhould be progreflive, and not ftationary. Fixed laws



laws should be distinguished from temporary regulations, and gradually ascend towards perfection, by steps built upon different and comparative experiments, adapted to the natural progress of mankind in every thing else. Yet when we venture on considerable changes, how few of them prove to be remedies! This arises chiefly from want of the above distinctions, and from such changes being introduced by force, and not originating from those who are most concerned in the event; being principally made by ignorant and indolent despotism, which can never produce good laws, such as execute themselves from being the real voice and interest of a large majority of all concerned. Human wisdom is unequal to sudden and violent changes in laws and government, which are rarely attempted but in despotic countries, where wisdom is least to be expected. The necessity of every great reform must be obvious, and long wished for, before it be undertaken, and then it should only be effected by gradation, which makes every thing easy.

Few have a right to consider this as common-place. What is known is far from being sufficiently diffused, and what remains to be discovered, is considerable and essential. As you may be a senator as well as a soldier, the two first characters in the state, and which, I think, should be oftener united, I wish you to be a civilian by times, and to take the most enlarged views of mankind. Your studies, and your travels, should chiefly be directed to those great objects, and you ought to learn to neglect, without despising, the trifles that employ the majority of the rich, and even of the learned.

## L E T T E R XVI.

*General Knowledge. Universities. Arts.  
Travel. Military.*

MY LORD,

A PERSON of your son's fortune and genius, I acknowledge, might and ought to attempt a general acquaintance with most subjects, in preference to a more profound investigation of a few only. But for that purpose he must be left a good deal to his own course, without much of the restraint of school methods or discipline. His quickness and sensibility are good symptoms, and may carry him farther than all the powers of mere application ever could go. You will see him much sooner ascend the tree of knowledge by direct ways of his own, than others by all their crooked artificial paths and analytic ladders. Such minds require only to be followed, and occasionally directed, and are not to be blindly led through the common modes of modern minutiae. Though we should always beware of paren-

tal partiality, and of mistaking the idleness and vivacity of youth for real genius and abilities ; I think, in this case, we are in no great danger of such a mistake. I wish you might find some easier and more direct methods of educating our youth, than those usually practised even in our highest schools : some other method is much wanted to fix the objects, and guide the rapid progress of genius towards more active and important parts in life.

Those monkish institutions called universities, are growing too old and unfit for the present times, and should perhaps be laid aside for something new and more practical, on some such plan as that proposed by Milton, &c. the very novelty of which might awaken some fresh zeal and exertion. After all the attempts of these old fraternities to follow the improvements of the age, from the nature of their constitution I fear they will generally be too slow and too late ; and we may doubt if on such old foundations there can be erected any institution, any mode or system of education, that will keep pace with the wants

wants and progress of society: though the endeavours which, we hear, are now employed for that purpose are certainly commendable, and may be attended with some temporary success: such success is, however, generally personal, and often dies with the reformers. You see the merits of Leyden seemed to terminate with Boerhaave, and even those of Edinburgh may gradually disappear, if fortune should fail to supply successors worthy of their present excellent teachers. I have often wondered there are not more attempts among us to erect some new seminaries for general and useful knowledge, which might create emulation between the old and new.—Is there any hope from that at Warrington?

In this country we are forcibly struck with the necessary connection of the arts, on seeing the lame progress of some on account of the want of others. I cannot therefore so readily agree with you in supposing, that the useful arts and trades should, or can be successfully cultivated in any nation, without the ornamental or fine arts; and am sorry that such opinions are yet so



common among us. Be assured, the arts are all necessary to each other, and all must be carried on at the same time: though we are yet behind-hand in some of them, I think we are getting into the right way to succeed in all; and as we advance, we shall gradually perceive the necessary connection of the whole. That any of them are incompatible with others, I consider as a mere speculative prejudice. Though that elevation of mind, so necessary in some of the liberal arts and walks of life, may not seem to unite well with the mercenary spirit of commerce; yet we see that a people must first be at their ease before they can attend to pleasure, or its various sources in nature, art, or fancy. Riches, gradually acquired in a state of freedom and exertion by trade, will naturally promote agriculture, letters, arts, and science, whenever government has wisdom enough only to suffer it. Society then would cure itself of many follies, and much ignorance; the different ranks and classes of men would be brought nearer together, instead of being set asunder; the upper ranks would be cured of certain remains of feudal pride and nonsense, and the

the lower, of a certain mean and deceitful spirit of traffic and gain, which debases, as it engrosses, the soul; and all the arts would advance abreast. A spirit of trade and industry should doubtless be encouraged, or rather left to encourage and produce itself: that spirit is then capable of being gradually improved into enlarged and liberal sentiment, and may in time come to be nearer allied to arts, arms, science, and good taste: our nation shews sufficiently the possibility of that progress.

Though the English, in my opinion, are now before the rest of the world in most of the arts of importance, there are still some branches left behind the rest, and even the most advanced must feel the want of their companions. I am highly pleased to see your son has so thoroughly imbibed both the musical and military spirit, and is so well disposed and in the way to acquire those accomplishments; but not *à l'Anglois*, I hope, as yet; for these are just the arts in which our nation is, I fear, the most deficient, and without being sufficiently sensible of the defect.

Though we could perhaps produce a little army, superior, on the whole, to any other of equal numbers, as our men are excellent when they can be properly disciplined; yet I believe Germany is now the superior school for officers, as Italy is for music: and all the arts are so naturally connected, especially when well advanced, that even music is probably a necessary link of the chain. Though our island may not, as formerly, for some time produce many generals and artists of the very first class, we are in a fair way to be made sensible of what we want, which is, you know, the first step towards amendment. But in those walks we cannot thoroughly succeed, if confined to our own island, where the mind will be limited to certain tracts and nationalities, even in her greatest progress; and to set her free, we must cross seas and continents, and live and act a part in other countries.

Let us hope then that our active English spirit, and passion for travel, will continue and increase among us, as well for the support of the character and the arts we already so eminently possess, as for the improvement

provement of those in which we are deficient ; in that case, our natural ardour and perseverance will gradually surmount every difficulty, and we may become the first people of the world in every human acquirement, as well as in political importance : but if we were to shut ourselves up at home, and from pride, parsimony, or any other false principle, relinquish, like the Spaniards, the intercourse and connection with rival powers, we should soon become a subordinate nation, and our genius and industry would die away as they have done here.

Nor can I see by all your arguments, drawn from situation or constitution, why we may not become also a very military nation. The nation has, at different times, been very much so, and was, I believe, always the better for it. The taking the part that naturally belongs to us in the continental wars and alliances of the world, has commonly had the best effects upon us ; giving a military turn to the people, and to our gentlemen, which all together made advantageous additions to

the English character, and produced advances in arts and in arms, with a certain urbanity and civilization, which our government and situation, though both excellent, do not perhaps of themselves bestow. Men and nations must mix and contend with each other. Our former wars with France probably contributed to form a Black Prince, and many other gallant officers commanding troops and archers the best in Europe. King William, being great both as a soldier and a politician, by his continental wars and connections produced great and accomplished statesmen, generals, writers; hence our Marlboroughs, Somers's, Priors, Swifts, &c. The military character was always of great importance to us, and seems now to be becoming highly necessary again: our political place in Europe may soon be such as to make it absolutely necessary for us all to learn to fight: the number and situation of our enemies may make a constant guard, and general discipline, as necessary to us as to any other more military nation; and we are constantly subject to this danger, from the intrigues of our enemies. The internal vigour  
and



and defence of each nation, the peace and safety of the whole together, will constantly depend much on all being well and almost equally prepared for war.

I could wish it were again a fashionable part of education for most of our young gentlemen to serve a few years, and should be glad to see a little of our ancient military enthusiasm revived. To neglect, discourage, and cry down the military spirit, as is usual with us in time of peace, is a most dangerous doctrine. If country gentlemen are weak enough to be jealous of their defenders, why do they not learn to defend themselves? It is when a small and separate part only of a nation is military, that the nation is in a real state of danger and debility; and our safety would every way consist in military knowledge and practice being general and common among us. Our dread of giving arms and discipline to the people, proceeds from our ignorance and want of experience in these matters.

There are certain peaceful doctrines preached up by learned, benevolent, and bookish men, which ministers, in particular,

cular, should beware of adopting, as they are unfit for this world. If they have ever been the cause of neglect or loss of military discipline, they have so far contributed to the ruin of nations; for such neglect has generally preceded, hastened, or completed their downfall. Long peace and security have always had the worst effects on the human character, producing a progression of indolence, luxury, effeminacy, weakness, and national ruin. Those doctrines become really dangerous when they pretend to teach us to avoid the temptations to war, by laying aside the preparations for it. To fancy that the world can exist in perpetual peace, implies ignorance of the nature of man. The natural pride and injustice of all nations, or separate bodies of men, towards each other, must ever produce wars: they are, perhaps, as necessary in the political or moral world, as storms or thunder are in the natural. Perpetual peace might be as hurtful to us as perpetual fair weather: so that those speculative philosophers might be more beneficially employed in learning their military exercises; or these occupations should perhaps be mixed so as  
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to relieve each other, the active with the sedentary, arms with letters. A life of entire study is not fit for human beings: let them preach peace and benevolence to all, and then prepare for war, and learn the use of arms: some of the best of men have done so.

When we can get government to adopt such principles and promote such practice, and shall find our young men of fashion looking abroad for every occasion to see service, desirous to join or imitate such men as a Clinton or a Carleton (who are just gone with General Lloyd to join Romanzoff), in order to see the wars and manners of Turks, Russians, Tartars, Algerines, &c.; and to examine the Prussian and Austrian armies, the scientific principles of fortification and artillery, wherever these may be found in practice, as in the mountains of Piedmont or of Silesia, on the Rhine or in the plains of Flanders, or the Dutch frontiers; I shall then have hopes of the revival of our military spirit. On the return of such young men

men, it may soon be perceived whether they understand what they have seen, and have imbibed the military spirit: they will bring home books and plans, and will continue attentive to every minute part of their duty, to the military sciences, and to whatever is going on among our engineers and artillery at Woolwich, or elsewhere; and you may then be pretty sure they are worth your acquaintance.

Doubtless, either of the extremes, too much military madness, or a total neglect of all discipline and defence, has each its bad consequences; yet you will readily perceive, that the safest and wisest would be that of war and discipline, especially when kept within bounds by the moderation and wisdom of a steady and scientific government.

The tendency or disposition towards war or peace, may depend much on the form of government, which thereby acquires almost its greatest importance. If there be any form that pretends to exclude, and make no provision for war, or any other  
that

that may lead constantly towards it, we may venture to pronounce them both unfit for men. There have been feudal and other systems, that seemed to make war their only object; and Quaker systems that pretended to exist in eternal peace: but of both we have seen the precarious and short duration.



## L E T T E R XVII.

*Theory with Practice. Public Diversions.  
Women. Theatre. Letters. Learning.*

Cadiz.

WE ought to study and know much, as you justly observe, before we travel, and should be not only desirous, but qualified to converse with all who are eminent, to catch their ideas, and profit by every thing we see. But the task of being so qualified seems infinite, and life too short for half the course in the usual way, unless we determine to dash across the country of science, by some short paths, directly at the great objects and principles of useful knowledge; like a Frederic, who sees and seizes at once the essentials on every subject, and whose second thoughts are those of a master and inventor.

As arts and society advance, an extensive and thorough knowledge of the world,  
joined

joined to that of books and learning, becomes gradually more difficult. Either of those requires our whole attention: nay, each must again be subdivided, and every part become the only pursuit of entire bodies of men. Hence the necessary connection of the whole must be lessened or lost. Instead of approaching, theory and practice will recede from, each other. However difficult it may be to join the studious with the active life, yet they must be joined in every great character. If knowledge and activity continue to exclude each other; if the study of books, and the spirit of industry, become incompatible, the moral and political sciences, which require the most active and the greatest intellectual abilities; the most extensive theory with practice, and study with experience, may gradually receive less of those assistances of which they stand the most in need: and the great master-science of government may yet long fall to the share of partial proficients, and feel the want of those men of universal minds, who were anciently  
more

more common, more practical and enterprising.

Though science or theory is far before blind practice and routine in dignity and importance, yet I fear we are not to look for much knowledge fit for immediate use from the closet speculations of the most studious and learned: and, singular as it may appear, they who are the best or most informed, seem to go often the farthest wrong. But there does not seem to be occasion for more precautions against their speculations. We do not find that men of business, or of the world, ministers or monarchs, are much inclined to mind what is said by your Rousseaus, Mirabeaus, Helvetiuses, and many others; yet their speculations may be of use at some future period.

However qualified you may chance to be, I must insist, that all of you who can, should travel, especially men in your high and important station, as you owe your  
best

best efforts to the public. Artists, magistrates, military men, all should travel, and take more enlarged views of nature and of art, of men and things, than one island can afford.

The public and private diversions and amusements of every country should be attended to by travellers. They may generally serve to shew the national taste and disposition, which will then often appear without reserve. I shall not trouble you with particulars about the Spanish bull-feasts, as they have been so often described, though they might furnish some observations on the national taste; on the habits and distinctions of cruelty and courage. I fear it is becoming the fashion to cry down these manly diversions as barbarous; I find they are not now pursued with the same spirit as formerly, and gentlemen take seldom, of late, a part in fighting the bull, but leave it to the hired gladiators, who are generally butchers by profession.

Nor should we overlook the women of any country. Some of them are found to

be like beings of superior intelligence; and even with the most ordinary, we may learn anecdotes, characters, or secrets, of some importance, such as may lead to what you want, and to greater things than may at first appear. In this country, we are agreeably surpris'd to meet with so much lively wit, grace, and sentiment, in the sex, where there is so little reason to expect any thing of the kind, amidst so much superstition and ignorance. Their talents and disposition for music, their pretty little songs, and, still more, their arch and fascinating manner of singing them, come very *à-propos* to crown the whole of their power and influence. Though they are not free from the baneful contagion of the national superstition, yet the native graces, more than the beauty of the sex here, may be said to be too powerful for the devil himself; for in spite of a constant and well-cultivated dread of him, and all that their ghostly and ignorant fathers can say, they are perhaps the gayest, the most lively and agreeable women in Europe. Though their timid devotion carries them so often

to



to church, yet even there, the arch vivacity of their disposition appears; and under the gloom of their black veils and melancholy demeanour, there passes, between the sexes, much of that silent conversation in which they are so great adepts.

The Spanish theatre is still, perhaps, nearly the same as in the time of Lopez de Vega. The living history of former times is here to be seen in various things. On their stage, only intrigue, vice, roguery, low buffoonery, cruelty, and the marvellous, can please them: the pieces are generally both written and spoken in a most unnatural staking style of cold and pompous declamation; their action on the stage, so cold and stiff, though in common life and conversation so natural, lively, and expressive. As I think French tragedy, or declamation, is all one kind of lamentable bursting expression of bodily pain; so that of the old actors here is all a kind of monotonous proud style of whining or petulant reasoning; and their frequent long

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speeches,

speeches, and cold soliloquies, become very tiresome indeed. Nothing sentimental or pathetic; much high-flown figure and bombast; endless strings of metaphors; much incident and intrigue, but little or nothing natural. Yet the beautiful flowery language of Lopez is charming. They have lately attempted some translated pieces, and some tolerable imitations of the passions, for the first time perhaps since Cervantes. I have just seen one of them acted, our Gamester. I observed, that the audience generally laughed in ridicule at the places where I wept; at the most pathetic parts; for it was tolerably acted by some of Olavide's disciples: but now that he is gone—to the Inquisition, and his theatrical school is no more, their native barbarism will probably again prevail. They stand much in need of such men, and he was introducing good taste, and a relish for truth and nature, among them, with more success than I should have expected. However, the history of their stage, and of their poetry, with all their defects,

*acuestas,*

*acuestas*, would probably be the most interesting part of an account of their literature\*.

I wish the Spaniards and Italians would apply more to this art of acting and elocution. They would outdo all other nations, by the advantages of countenance, of habitual expression, manner, and animation.

You know the Spaniards have had their golden period of learning, and of some approaches to good taste, always with much of the fire of genius. It rose with the latter of their native monarchs soon after the revival of arts and letters in Italy, declined with the power of their Austrian princes, and fell with the loss of their connection and intercourse with Italy, Flanders, and the other European nations. Cervantes tried to stop the progress of bad

\* I find a very agreeable account of their poetry is since published by Mr. Dillon, who gave us Bowles's Natural History of Spain, &c. This account of their poets, and still more of their poetry, I should think, might be considerably enlarged in another edition. You may likewise see some account of these in Linguet, and of their artists, in Cumberland, Twiss, &c.

taste, but not with the success he merited. False principles and bad habits had already taken too deep root. He probably contributed much towards completely banishing the romantic and rather respectable spirit of chivalry, which was already more than sufficiently on the decline; but he could not stop the natural progress and growing love of ornament and affectation. Thence we may trace their love of bombast and the marvellous, the redundancy of figure and exaggeration, in writing; a taste which has reigned ever since, with very few exceptions. The decline once begun, was probably hastened by the too fertile fancy, and defective delicacy and judgment, of Lopez and others, and it seems to have been fostered and revived, as if congenial to the fiery and extravagant taste of the nation.

In moral subjects, in wisdom, in the knowledge of men and of human nature, they, for a time, were the first, and led the way. In sound philosophy  
and

and useful science, they have generally been deficient. Their deep scholastic studies, their investigations of antiquity, their few, though superior, labours in the fine arts, have never been sufficiently connected with society, nor profitable to the community.



## L E T T E R XVIII.

*Wit.            Manners.      Character.    Taste.*  
*Language.    Authors.*

Cadiz.

THE Spaniards in general, and the Andalusians in particular, with imaginations so warm and fertile, have a powerful taste and disposition for wit, and many of both sexes are great adepts in that way: with the most composed and steady countenance they will long keep the table in a roar, and are infinitely amusing: but as is usual with warm and impetuous fancy, there is often a want of delicacy, of sound taste and judgment: they attempt and relish all species of wit, and often prefer the lower and coarser kinds: but let us beware of becoming too difficult to please, which we English, I believe, often are; we may refine too much, and must lose by being too nice and squeamish. A good  
strong

strong appetite will digest all natural food ; and genuine wit, when not too loathsome with indecency, flattery, or soured with severity, ought always to please. Though greatly changed and Frenchified since their Bourbon connexions, they have not yet lost all those enthusiastic and romantic notions which once distinguished and raised them, however ridiculously, above other mortals. In every rank we yet find some of those old and dignified characters, with a certain elevation of soul, and many lofty ideas, though accompanied with what our modern delicacy may consider as a ridiculous pride.

Though politically they are now of small consideration, except in their own ideas, and but little of their former national greatness or character may remain, besides their pride, yet individually the country still abounds in valuable characters, or rather in materials of which such characters may be readily formed when wanted. We meet with as excellent and amiable qualities of mind as in the most polished and enlightened nations: this is  
often,

often, I believe, the case in rude and misgoverned countries ; virtues arise as they are wanted, where the soil and materials are good, and here they are excellent. Wise Nature seems solicitous in bringing every condition of society nearly to a level of happiness. If you live any time among them, you will meet with souls capable of every virtue, but may observe how few occasions or motives there are to practise any, in this state of society and government. They are obviously made for generosity, probity, magnanimity, resolution, perseverance, and still retain a certain cool and habitual equanimity of temper and sound judgment, which we find in no other nation, joined to such warmth of heart and fancy. But, even on this foundation, you will too often find a structure of vice and ignorance ; especially in the lower classes, degrees of indolence, idleness, malevolence, depravity of taste and disposition, which exhibit at once to view the powers of habit and of a bad government, and the dregs or ruins of a most respectable national character. The Spaniards, though naturally

turally deep and artful politicians, have still something so nobly frank and honest in their disposition, that they are not, I think, in proportion, politically insidious or treacherous, unless the French make them so. Of the modern national characters, I am inclined to place the Spanish and English, so nearly alike, among the first. I believe there is likewise something rather superior still perceptible in the modern Roman character, as well as in their language and manner; and also in the Mahinotes, or modern Lacedæmonians, and in the Macedonians.

The manners of the politer societies here, and of the higher ranks, are already too closely copied from the French, who, you know, are not naturally delicate nor sentimental, but artificially refined by fashion. By means of the ladies in Spain, who readily adopt the liberty of French manners, which, engrafted on their own, they carry beyond the original, this nation will gradually be Frenchified, in spite of all the old Dons and old antipathies. The

women being, of late, admitted to more freedom and society, and at a period of loose manners, retaining all their old habits of art and intrigue, the freedom of intercourse between the sexes will probably be carried farther here than in the more polished countries, whose vices they have acquired, without passing through the same *media* or degrees of civilization and arts of luxury. Vice, in various shapes, seems already here to stalk forth almost naked and alone, unrestrained by habits and refinements, which elsewhere grow up with it. All leads to a coarse and unadorned kind of materialism in pleasure, to degrees of depravity and satiety, in which they will overtake their more refined neighbours, who began the same career so long before them. However, the fair sex, as usual, are still far more refined and sentimental than the men, and as they are gaining more influence in society, may retard or regulate the progress of depravity. Every stranger who stays long enough to understand them, is captivated with the spirit, grace, and humour of their conversation. You know  
some-



something of the romantic force of their passions, their strong and inviolable attachments, especially when heightened by the difficulties of intrigue. Though the jealousy of husbands seems now worn out of fashion, the spirit of it is preserved among the lovers, and love is still an object of the first importance in Spain. Their numerous love-songs have still many graces, and though tinged with the hyperbolical false taste of the times, are often highly expressive, refined, and laconic.

There are, as elsewhere, more vices in their sea-ports and capital towns, than in the rest of the country where their ancient character and distinguishing manners have not yet entirely disappeared; and we English are generally pleased and proud to cherish and to relish such remains, in opposition to the French; while they, with a sneer of contempt, despise both the Spaniards and us for our bad taste in not preferring every thing that is French: in their idea, *nous ne sommes que des barbares tous les deux.*

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These two nations are, to be sure, as opposite in almost every thing as nature could well make such near neighbours. Even the actual state and taste of female beauty is widely different in the two countries. After observing the prevalent style of beauty in France, we can readily conceive, that *Monsieur* cannot much admire that of this nation; nor relish or comprehend all the numerous Spanish graces of person, manner, language, nor the high expressions of physiognomy, so different from, and I think far superior to, those of his own nation. Among the fine faces here, consisting of features generally large and strongly expressive, he finds nothing like the little round or rather square face, with the snub nose and pigeon's eye, which is the style of beauty the most common and the most esteemed in France.

Where we find such fine abilities and natural good sense, joined to so much ignorance and false taste, such loose manners and unrestrained vices, with great inquisitorial severity in religious observances, it is plain, that the church, their only school,  
aims

aims not at the improvement of morals or of learning, but at power: nay, I think the most superstitious nations are the most wicked and debauched, and we may almost measure their degrees of vice by the apparent ardour of their devotion. There is, perhaps, more probity, though less appearance of religion, in London, than in any other great town in Europe.

The Spanish, like the Italian, was among the first improved of the modern languages, and has long remained nearly in its present state: sonorous, majestic, now hyperbolically expressive, yet full of natural beauties and graces, and capable of many more; susceptible of almost every style or modulation, but more particularly of the flowing, *altisonante y grandioso*, as Don Quixote says, and even of the sublime; but not having been lately employed by good taste and simplicity, neither in many works of modern delicacy, nor with sufficient freedom in subjects of real interest and importance, it has not kept pace with some of its neighbouring languages, and still retains  
the

the habits of its old romantic or less ancient bombast, even in the prose writers: though there are late essays, as the *Pensador*, *P. Isla*, &c. which have some claim to more natural graces, and serve to shew the various powers of the language. But it is spoken with more purity, with more dignity and politeness, even by the peasantry, and with less variation, through a greater extent of country, than almost any other language in Europe; viz. throughout the two Castiles, Leon, Estremadura, La Mancha, Granada, Murcia; and in Andalusia, though not admitted as pure or classical, it is spoken with a peculiar grace, spirit, and salt; which last is the expression here as well as in Attica. From Burgos to Malaga, you will not probably meet with a grammatical error in the conversation of any rank or individual; nor a vulgarism, which indeed is a distinction almost unknown in this nation. You cannot often here, as with us and elsewhere, distinguish ranks and classes of men by the style of their language: all speak correct and elegantly. With all their rags and poverty,  
yet

yet there are no vulgar, no disgusting black-guards, nor ballad-fingers: even the abuse, and the songs, of the meanest and most ignorant, have generally wit or poetry, good language, or taste enough to render them remarkable, or raise them above vulgarity; and you will often find the songs of your muleteer ingenious, amusing, and agreeable.

To attempt any tolerable account of their numerous writers, would lead us too far; and I have already, I believe, told you where to find information concerning many of them. Cervantes has produced but few successful imitators, though they have since had poets of great wit and humour; of these, you will have collections published. P. Isla's tedious novel of a friar, is far inferior to Don Quixote, and not interesting; though he gives some good pictures of low life. But when he assumes the philosopher, and talks of Newton, &c. he is poor indeed.

P. Feijoo, whom they celebrate so highly, I think scarcely equal to our middling



writers of the last century. He seldom gets beyond the present tedious and affected manner of his nation, and makes, at best, but a superstitious philosopher. Yet he must have some merit, as he is so generally read and esteemed by his countrymen, who must be the best judges of his style.

Political writers, such as Campomanes, with the translators and importers of foreign ideas and improvements, might be considered as the most useful authors here, if any authors can be of use in such a country, while under such a government. It is difficult to find out, and still more so to apply, means sufficient to open the eyes of those determined to keep them shut, or to discover the remedies that should reach the vital sources where their disorders originate. Changes and improvements are not more, but often less practicable for being necessary ; and truth becomes less perceptible, and less attainable by its greater distance.

The most absolute and determined monarch could not probably do much in this nation towards reforming the present  
race,

race, so far gone in indolence, ignorance, poverty, and superstition: he could only prepare for the improvement of succeeding generations by wise laws, which might gradually produce a better constitution of government, and a different race of people. I should be for his beginning with such laws as might facilitate the alienation of estates and the introduction of religious toleration. But the power of despotism itself is limited by popular prejudice and ancient custom: hence the constant endeavours of the most sagacious tyrants to level all such barriers, to banish laws and rules, and to bring all into a state of confusion, and, as they think, to a dependence on their own will. A monarch here, or even at Morocco, must possess uncommon degrees of popularity, wisdom, and science, as well as power, before he can venture to meddle with the religion of his subjects. The worst kinds of religion seem to be the most immovable, and to have the strongest hold, and the most influence, on the minds and manners of the people.

## L E T T E R   X I X .

*Sierra Morena. Olavide. Cordova. The  
Moors, their Arts, Manners, Taste.  
Walks. Society. Cortejos. Situation.*

Coruña, 1779.

**I** PROCEED with the memorandums of our journey. From these I wish to pick you out some observations, and for the sake of brevity they will probably be as detached and unconnected as ever. I wish not to trouble you nor myself much about local knowledge, which must have been published by former travellers and antiquaries.

The two little new settlements in the Sierra Morena, of Swiss and Germans, chiefly vagabonds, have not succeeded very well, but better perhaps than there was reason to expect, even in spite of the opposition

position of ignorance and superstition, the constant enemies of every improvement; and against that still more powerful enemy, the national government, which, in most countries, is unfit for such detail, and particularly so in this. You know men in general want little more of its assistance than a small portion of liberty and protection; but in the case of a new colony, somewhat more was wanting, and more than this government could give, viz. that the assistance should be directed by good sense and practical knowledge.

Many of the people have died, from poverty and real want, from change of climate and food, and from their own vices and helpless idleness, while others have run away. Many of them being but bad subjects in their own country, could not be expected to become good citizens here. However, most of the houses first built are still inhabited, though the expected additions are not yet found necessary.

At Gran Carlotta, the houses are ill-placed, and evidently by persons who were no farmers, and the possessions of each too small ; with several other material defects, which make it almost impossible that any considerable improvement in agriculture can be introduced or extended, which was the chief object : so that some of the few remaining people have taken to making hats and baskets of straw, and selling them to passengers.

On seeing a ragged Spaniard sit playing on a guitar among the Germans that were at work, some obvious remarks on that characteristic trait were unavoidable ; but two of my Spanish companions were very angry with the third for joining with me in those observations. This national pride might surely be turned to some good account by a wise government ; and what contributes now to indolence and poverty, might produce industry and wealth.

Carolina is much prettier, and a better village, with some good gardens, fences, and trees ; but it seems already on the decline.



cline. Many houses and fences are neglected and in ruins, since they lost Olavide, their late excellent intendant. He was taken up by the Inquisition, chiefly for having opposed the introduction of friars into his settlement. You may have seen his sentence, well calculated to support the pretensions of that horrid tribunal to be the first power of the state, and its claims of controlling every other. We were told (as a secret) by some people here, that Olavide was always pleased and happy at the prosperity of any one, and assisted each according to his merit and industry; but that his successor, on the contrary, distressed and levies most on the most successful, in the true modern Spanish spirit of finance and jealousy. The original contracts of government with these poor people begin now to be infringed, which will probably soon ruin the settlement, and restore these little spots again to their surrounding deserts. A tax of eighty-six thousand reals has been lately levied on their wines, against an express article of their agreement. The funds for repairs

have been diminished, and diverted to other purposes. The great pleasure of finding here milk, butter, and cheese, you will not easily conceive.

There is much fine land on the Guadalquivir, or great river, and it might easily be made navigable again to Cordova at least, which would help greatly to improve the country, and from this one river might issue supplies for half Europe, in oils, wines, &c. There is much rich low land in the plains of Seville, and some remains of former good methods of Moorish cultivation, as well as in Murcia and Valencia. But still, for so rich a soil, the population and villages are but thin; though they are said to have been very numerous during the time of the Romans, and afterwards of the Moors. We may find some information on this subject from various authors; and particularly, I am told, from a Moorish writer, *Racis*.

Cordova occupies a noble situation on the banks of this river, surrounded by a great variety of rich and grand country.

Before

Before it, to the south, is a boundless but varied plain : behind, to the north, are the sublime mountains of Sierra Morena, full of woods, water, and a variety of soils,—of charming situations, where the Romans, and afterwards the Moors, had many delightful country-houses and palaces; but it is now all a howling wilderness.

Were I king of Spain, I think this should be my capital, for many reasons. I would go to Seville in winter, and perhaps to Granada in August. The river would then soon become navigable much higher. I should be within a day's journey of Seville, Cadiz, Granada, and little more from Carthage. With those places so near, almost in sight from my magnificent mountains, I think I could govern the world; but I hope I should be liberal enough not to attempt it, but only shew them how to govern themselves.

Many houses, and I believe whole towns, have been built from the ruins of those of the Romans, the beauties of which, their barbarous conquerors and successors could  
neither

neither relish nor estimate. Such is the melancholy history of nations and their works, destroying and destroyed by turns ; so that it is more surprising that any thread of their story should be preserved, than that it should be lost. The Moors were merciless destroyers at first, and even after they were considerably advanced, and had learned to build, they used to cram the elegant capitals, friezes, inscriptions of the Romans, often turned upside down, into the common walls of their huge and melancholy buildings. And even when most improved by riches and luxury, their manners and character still retained the same dull melancholy cast, which probably proceeded from their former Asiatic habits of a recluse and jealous way of living ; and this is what may have contributed most to give the same turn to the taste and character of the Spaniards, their neighbours and successors, which has lasted so long, and is only beginning of late to wear out.

I think it likewise appears, from their remains, that the Moors never cultivated any of the fine arts with any tolerable success,

cess, except poetry. Some of the useful arts and trades were improved, perhaps to some small degree of taste, or rather of neatness. They seem never to have had any idea of outside architecture, or of shewing the beauties of their habitations, or any indication of their happiness, to the world. All their pleasures were ever jealously shut up from the view of their fellow-creatures. To what a number of social virtues and pleasures they must have been strangers! None of the fine arts can probably be introduced or flourish without architecture, which must lead, and partly govern the rest,

Some of their palaces, which on the outside looked like prisons, have however been supplied with luxuriant ornaments and conveniencies within. Among these, the works in plaster make the first and best figure: but their painting and sculpture were wretched. Even the carpenters and smiths seem always to have been but poor workmen. Nor did the Moors ever probably possess many good methods of applying the mechanical powers, by convenient machines,



machines, that facilitate and abbreviate labour.

The Eastern selfish recluse way of life ; the separation of the sexes, of trades, families, tribes ; we may consider as a leading principle, which will help to explain these, and many other striking differences between their arts and manners, and those of Europe. Hence their ignorance of the powers of mutual assistance, and of the progress in mechanical inventions and improvements ; of divided and of united labour ; of manufactories, and of armies : hence their simple and independent little ways of each workman doing every thing for himself ; their great proficiency in many domestic trades and employments, and their weakness in the aggregate : hence their want of social virtues and talents, and hence their ignorance of all species of government, except despotism, may be chiefly deduced.

Yet they had some liking for the beauties of nature and of pleasant situations ; but when they found them, they seemed only desirous

desirous to shut them up, with their huge mud or taby walls. These they contrived to make stick together, so as to last a long time, though never equally with those of stone, as some have thought. This mode of building you may find described in various authors and dictionaries. The choice and mixture of the materials must have been the essential parts of the art. When well worked and brought to the consistency of clay, or stiff mortar, it was then rammed, by small portions, on the wall, while confined by frames, which were afterwards removed as the work dried. This method, as well as that of plaster and many others, took its rise from a littleness in their ways of working, and from their want of power to manage great weights. Yet they industriously improved the arts of agriculture, which must have advanced several others; and we know they sedulously studied and improved the sciences, and were then by far the first people of their time. Human nature is ever full of inconsistencies.

Cordova wears now but a poor and melancholy appearance, and seems sunk in

6 indolence,

indolence, dirt, ruins, misery, and convents. The palace of the great Almanzor is turned into an Inquisition, that is, the part which is not in ruins. Indeed, most of their beautiful remains in this country are now in ruins, or buried under ground, or, which is nearly the same, disposed of to friars, who have altered or defaced them from motives of superstitious enmity ; except some of those at Granada, which have been slightly repaired by Mr. Wall.

We could find only two artists here, Frenchmen, and they are but poorly supported, chiefly by the church. But they are on the point of departure. Some of their best works, statues, and vases, which they had been long preparing for the public walk here, were thrown down and destroyed the first night, by the barbarous populace, to the great mortification of the poor artists, and of the *Corregidor*, a man of some taste, who had before improved the public walks of Esija. Such is the fate of arts and philosophy in this country,

which

which gives a tolerable image of the great progress with which this nation has been flattering itself, ever since the Bourbon succession to these kingdoms. The Bourbons certainly do not mean that Spain should advance far in arts, population, or power; otherwise they might and would have taken other methods to accomplish it.

A decent public walk (*Alameda*) to every town, is a very agreeable and commendable part of public police, and is still kept up in Spain with more assiduity and good taste, than in many better countries.

We also found here some very fine women, and agreeable society; and, I think, the sex have been more favoured in these countries, and particularly Granada, as to personal beauty, than in most other parts of Spain; perhaps from some remaining mixture of Moorish blood. You know my prepossessions in favour of mixing different races of people.

In

In most of their considerable country towns, we still meet with some gentry, who, with the church and the military, form very agreeable little societies, *tertulias*; the merits and pleasures of which are chiefly owing to the good humour, native graces, wit, and affability of the ladies, so generally remarkable in this nation.

*La Cicesbeatura (el cortejar)* seems now as universally and firmly established in this country as in Italy, and this kind of illicit love connections seems to be tacitly understood, and agreed to, by all the parties concerned. The stranger, soon after his arrival, is impatiently expected to fix his choice, make his presents, and go through the usual *formulæ* of such attachments, in which they are more constant, and more in earnest, than their neighbours the French, or even the Italians. From the pleasures of those agreeable societies, we are perhaps too ready to forgive the deficiencies of the members as individuals; but when we come coolly to consider the tendency of their manners, truth and virtue



we require that we withdraw some part of our esteem.

The provincial gentry, in imitation of their superiors in the capital, thus lead mostly an idle, and what we should call an useless, perhaps a vicious life, divided between the coach, cards, the church, and intrigue. A manly education, and useful studies; foreign travel; virtues and abilities of public importance, or any efforts for the good of the country; are little thought of, or attempted, perhaps because they may appear inapplicable to any beneficial purpose in this country; and the private satisfaction of such acquirements is seldom found to be a sufficient motive to overcome the trouble they may cost. But the Spaniards seem born with a disposition to mirth, dancing, music: the practice and proficiency in these, form at once the sum of their endowments, the amusement of their societies, and the chief business of their lives, and indeed may procure them greater happiness than more solid or serious occupations could do

in this country. There are, however, many exceptions to all these too general ideas, and doubtless more than we can know of; and even those amiable women who belong to society, *par état*, may go through the forms prescribed by custom, probably with perfect innocence.

This nation, though not changeable, is usually in extremes. A real, though rather a tacit opinion, seems now to prevail, of the innocence and propriety of those lateral love attachments, as much as it was formerly against them. Many, I know, are secretly persuaded, that where the pleasures of all concerned are increased, without injury to any other person, there can be nothing really criminal or injurious. No inquisitorial severity can stifle every private opinion. Such opinions and practices have often privately prevailed in this nation. We might instance the *iluminados* during the reign of Philip IV. and lately *la bella union*.

In toleration, Christianity, or at least popery, has, I believe, been generally out-  
done

done by Mahometism. Here, at Cordova, as arts and learning advanced among the Moors, religious toleration kept pace, and there were many intermarriages between the Mahometans and Christians. If their empire could have remained, and continued to improve, it might have helped to hasten the advancement and civilization of Europe as well as of the world, to reconcile those two inimical sects, and soften that barbarous inveteracy, which must now perhaps for ever, attend their local separation, till the one exterminate the other.

Spain and Spaniards might probably be considerably improved, if their gentlemen could be made to travel more, for they are perhaps the best travellers of us all, as Rousseau observes; and if the church could be persuaded to set bounds to herself, and more easily admit of strangers and heretics. The great Almanzor, and others of the Moorish princes, could persuade their priests to admit the arts, against their original tenets, and could make them interpret their barbarous exclusive religion

religion into universal principles of benevolence. A whole race of princes of Orange could teach the different sects of christians to tolerate each other. Are we never again to see a prince in this country who shall have at once influence and liberality enough, with force and benevolence of mind, to act with success on such principles?

## L E T T E R XX.

*Nobility. Mirth and Happiness. Antiquities. Arts and Population.*

IN considering the nobility of some countries, we are led to doubt whether the first and most distinguished ranks of men be always the best part of the nation, and must suspect that there may be in the nature of hereditary honours a tendency towards degeneracy. To keep a body of nobility up to the true spirit of honour and virtue, perpetual and powerful motives to exertion are probably requisite; such as the sentiments of chivalry, maintained by some constant great employ, as that of war or of legislation, and all other great objects of public weal. In such a government as this, those motives cannot probably exist in force and quantity sufficient for the purpose. Where they have so little hopes of



any signal employment, and are excluded from the management of public affairs, and even of their own, a life and character disposed to idleness and dissipation at least, are among the consequences to be expected.

If old families were not to wear out, and become extinct, leaving room for a fresh supply, a *corps de noblesse* would probably degenerate much faster. The first man of his family is frequently worth all the rest of it who come after him: indeed, we cannot expect in his pampered posterity to find much of his spirit or character, which was probably formed by a life of hardships, dangers, and difficulties: whence then this his anxious care in providing for his posterity such a load of riches and honours as may probably render them good for nothing? This question may cause you to think and produce various speculations on so important a subject, and on human nature and society, which is the chief end of these Letters. Your English nobility, from being hereditary legislators and judges,  
and

and being forced into a more temperate kind of pride, are led to have recourse to other merits besides those of birth; and may be longer kept up to their proper character.

Speculative philosophers, and book-men, may be indulged in the common cant of ill-treating heroes and conquerors, as the greatest and best of them will always require some control. But if titles and pre-eminence were only acquired, as they ought to be, by really serving the public, we should find by the general voice, that eminence in war first, and then in legislation or government, would most ennoble and distinguish men in society. The employments that require the strongest minds and most vigorous exertions, must be of the greatest importance, and military honours will generally hold the first rank; nor can it probably long remain otherwise in any nation, as war will ever be necessary, at times, while men are men. In the greatest characters, you see that of a warrior has ever been the chief requisite; and this has al-

ways been perceived by such men ; and on their early perception of it, have their rise and future greatness been built. The modern orders of nobility, though originally military, having lost much of the ancient spirit and purity of chivalry, may have greatly changed, and probably weakened the force and enthusiasm of character in the first ranks of men : hence a frequent and necessary recourse, in modern times, to new military distinctions : and some wise prince may yet find a great resource in distributing honours according to their original intention, and in bestowing the highest titles on military merit. It is said, they are trying this in Russia, but I believe it requires a free or mixed government to give such a measure all its effect : with them it is only a piece of foolish affectation, with which that court seems full as plentifully stored as any other. This, and several other of her assuming operations, look as if Russia laid herself out entirely for conquest, and only serve to make the world jealous and afraid of her, without cause ; for she cannot in fact be in a  
state

state to produce real dread or danger to Europe, perhaps for many ages to come ; and then the world may all be improved and civilized, which will render any general conquest impossible.

If the European governments have most of them a gradual tendency towards a refined species of despotism ; if the old romantic notions of honour, and all the remains of chivalry, must, by degrees, wear out, and the races of nobles naturally degenerate, while the people, or third estate, are nobody (except with you), and must therefore afford but a bad supply to recruit the *corps de noblesse* ; what control will then remain over mankind, the governors or governed, both naturally more vicious and improvident as government degenerates into tyranny, and gets beyond all restraint ? Where will nations then find virtue and honour sufficient to arrest, or even regulate the progress of depravity, and prevent the ruin of themselves and their posterity ? What can then stop the decline of this old and worn-out part of the world ? Europe must, perhaps, in time follow the steps  
and

and the fate of Asia, especially if she should ever be tempted again to pursue her conquests in that quarter. But I shall not now trouble you with prosecuting these airy speculations any farther; they are only started as hints for your future consideration, and not unworthy the attention of the philosopher who watches the tendency of our manners and systems of government.

But to return to Spain. Many mistake the present character of the Spaniards, and particularly their jealousy and gravity. I believe you will find less jealousy, and more good mirth among them, than in all the affected gaiety and noise of some of their neighbours. There is, to be sure, in the very excess and abundance of their wit, joy, and good-humour, a certain steady evenness of manner, equally distant from levity, as from pedantry or affectation: this is observable in all they do. With a kind of dry and grave humour, one of the company will often talk or sing all the rest into an extreme of mirth and laughter, preserving all the while a most serene and placid



placid firmness of countenance himself, *como quien no dice nada*. We find in them more mirth and happiness than may at first seem compatible with their poverty and indolence. But fortunately, such is often the lot of poor countries: *poco bien y bien quisto*. The scarcity of good things seems to be fully compensated by the more lively enjoyment of the few they retain. Some wants and difficulties seem to be among the necessary ingredients of human life: we are soon spoiled by plenty and indulgence. Voluntary exertions cannot always be equal to those of necessity. Riches and success will, in general, diminish our powers both of body and mind, by removing at once the sources of exertions and enjoyment. Human nature happily accommodates itself to situation; and this cheerful, though careless manner of wearing their chains, is probably the best for the present condition of these people, *y asi no ay mal que por bien no venga*, as Sancho's stories go: every thing has its use. When we think of improving the world, we should first consider well,

whether

whether happiness may not be already more equally distributed than could be done by all our wisdom and benevolence ; and that every considerable alteration in society should be much wanted and desired by the people themselves before it is attempted : let us not force it on them before we have taught them to wish for it.

This country affords more objects for the antiquary than the artist : few remarkable pieces of modern art are to be found, except in the royal palaces : yet Spain, you know, has produced some good painters and tolerable architects ; a few of these have struck out new paths, I think, with some success. The builder of the Escorial was a man of genius, and had grand ideas. If it was really intended to be built in the form of a gridiron, the idea probably came from Philip.

The remains of antiquity here have been learnedly treated by their own antiquaries, though not yet sufficiently dug up by the workmen : and these are hitherto

to objects of mere curiosity, without any influence on the national taste or improvement, as with you, where your carpenters and smiths begin already to work in the style of those of Greece and Rome. I hope you now perceive, that the 8000*l.* to Sir W. H—, for those museum antiquities, was not thrown away; and we may hope that the labours of a Bentley, a Wedgewood, and other ingenious manufacturers, will turn to public benefit, and the diffusion of good taste.

The Spaniards might learn many good things from the Roman monuments and antiquities; as, the police, management, and division of the country; roads and modes of communication; methods of building, of watering, cultivating, and dividing their lands; in various arts and trades: they might also learn much from some of these Germans, and other foreigners; from Catalonia, and still more from Biscaya, and sometimes even at their own doors: they have many examples scattered about the kingdom of what they ought

ought to do: but it is too plain, that no example, or temporary public assistance, can have its natural effects here. Some of the finest parts of their country are the least peopled, their extensive *sierras*: this of Sierra Morena, which extends from Murcia to Portugal, is full of fine vallies, with a variety of soils, of wood and water, which are all wanting in their arid plains, the only parts they have attempted to inhabit, and which are accordingly very thinly peopled and miserably cultivated. They seem determined to spare no labour in counteracting nature, and justly succeed in proportion to the wisdom of their efforts.

There are more paintings at Seville than at Cordova. We found there some gentlemen collectors, and a good many pieces of Morillo, particularly in the convent where he ended his days. This devout way of passing the latter part of life in convents, continues still to be the fashion in Spain, in which they are perhaps more consistent with their principles than ourselves. I  
cannot

cannot pretend to be such a connoisseur as to carry in my eye, from one distant country to another, the measure of merit of different masters; but it appears to me, as if Velasquez and Morillo should stand next to the very first of the Italian school, not only as faithful imitators of nature, but sometimes soaring above her, towards the true sublime, and particularly the former; the one seems to dignify, and the other to beautify nature.



## L E T T E R XXI.

*Country. Seguidillas. Timber. Sheep.  
Corporations. Nitre. Military Schools.  
Aranjuez.*

Madrid, 1779:

WE have passed through an estate of the duke of Alva, near Cordova, a country abounding in beauties, as usual about the skirts of mountains, but more particularly about this sublime Sierra Morena. It was there the late Duke was banished, and he considerably improved the lands, planting olive-woods, building some good oil-mills, stores, &c. We found a wheel on the river, forty feet diameter, which raised water nearly to that height, for watering some gardens, so simple as to require no attendance, but only repairs.

La Mancha—the country of the renowned Don Quixote, may be remarked  
for

for simplicity, poverty, mirth, and music. The country resembles most of the other internal Spanish plains, a dry, naked, brown clay, without a green spot, and hardly a shrub to be seen, except when the vines are in leaf. But in these few poor clay villages, there is plenty of good wine and good bread, and nothing but dancing and singing in or out of doors all the evenings. Poverty and mirth go together in these happy climes.

This seems the original country of those charming little songs called *Seguidillas*; their natural soil, where they grow spontaneously, made often *extempore*, and seldom written or noted down. Great numbers are made, sung, and danced here, which are never known in the rest of Spain, and they are probably more in the true old national taste, than even at Madrid. I was sorry I had not time to make a larger collection of them. We could willingly, and pleasantly, have passed much more time in some of those poor places. There is, in Spanish manners, in the language,

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mirth, and *gracia* of the people, a something that attaches and engages those who enter into the taste and spirit of it, but which, till then, is incomprehensible to the stranger or passing visitor.

We might almost measure the degrees of bad government, in different countries, by the destruction or want of timber. In Spain, scarce a tree is to be seen, except such as yet grow among inaccessible mountains. It is said that timber diminishes even in England, where so much is planted. Man is a destructive animal where he is not well treated. He requires good usage, and great security, to render him provident for a future day, and especially for posterity.

We met some of the *ganado merino*, or fine wool sheep, in large straggling flocks, on their travels from the northern mountains to winter in the southern plains. Some flocks travel above a hundred long leagues twice a year. But Bowles will give you all the particulars. Salt is a necessary part of their food. There is still, I find, some dispute even here about the proper quantity.

tity. The breeding of those fine wool sheep is probably only fit for a country like this, thinly inhabited, little cultivated, and without fences : but I doubt of its being the most profitable kind of produce, even here, where every thing would grow, I believe, with a little more pains, and more water, both of which might be had. However, this wool has long been a national object in Spain : they have a code of laws on purpose. The privileges of the *Mesta* (or sheep company) probably prevent inclosures, planting, and improvements : the want of trees most likely contributes to their want of water. It seems the fine wool is worth above a hundred reals *per aroba*, but the common sort only twelve or fifteen.

Let all states beware of great corporate bodies of people, and admit even small ones only on very good and obvious reasons. The natural subdivision of society is into families ; collective bodies more numerous may be dangerous or injurious to the public, and may be easily brought

to combine against the rest of the nation. The principles and formation of great companies and corporations are not yet well understood. England, Holland, &c. after having got rid of the old style of monopolies, are probably launching again too far, in admitting new kinds of corporate bodies, of *imperia in imperio*. The true spirit and natural operations of those may not be understood, till one, or some easy combination of them, shall seize or over-rule the state.

There must be much nitre in the air here, or the earth must be well adapted for generating or extracting it from thence, or both; for the same heaps of earth, without any change, addition, or mixture, give nearly the same quantity of saltpetre every year, at the works near Tembleque. This I was told by several different sets of workmen. They have powder-mills on the Guadiana, near this place.

We saw their horse-academy at *Ocano*, for educating officers for the cavalry only.

This



This is a small town with eleven convents. The plan of this school, like most other Spanish ideas on public matters, is too great ever to be completed. Their designs are generally gigantically magnificent, and impracticable: Muley Ishmael's palaces. If all the six or seven military schools, scattered about this kingdom, were united into one or two, they would probably be attended with more effect and œconomy.

The modern practice of dividing and subdividing labour, so necessary in most arts and trades, is apt to be carried too far, and to be adopted where it is unnecessary, or hurtful, as in the military. Since this spirit of separating things which are naturally connected, has taken place; since we attend more to fancied and forced distinctions, than to natural connections of things, and are lost in a diminutive style of minute philosophy; I think the strength of genius and of fancy has diminished, and the human mind has degenerated, since those times when a man

could be at once a statesman, philosopher, soldier, musician, poet, author, &c. But a man now takes only a part of a profession, and is fit for nothing else. Even an officer of horse is often a novice in the affairs of infantry. I should rather be inclined to think, with Cicero and Vitruvius, that no man can be very great in any thing of importance, without knowing almost every thing. All is connected in this world: though, I believe, I preached this doctrine before to our friend C——; I wish you, in particular, to consider it well, that you may endeavour to become great as a soldier, a senator, a farmer, &c. for they all assist each other.

*Aranjuez* has many beauties in its fine shady walks, river, and gardens; occupying a pretty little plain, which sinks down to a level with the river, and is hidden from the rude and naked high country that surrounds it: a fine picture in a huge ugly frame: a pleasant and shady, but not cheerful, retreat. There is something

thing rather melancholy and Moorish about some of the gardens and buildings. And about Spanish places, I think, there is generally something in a ruined or unfinished state, that tends to deaden the whole. The chapel, some pictures, and apartments, merit attention; but I must leave the description to others.

## L E T T E R XXII.

*Madrid. Arts. People. Escorial. Old  
Castile. Flocks. Towns. Church. Corn.  
Water. Government.*

I WISH to hasten through this journey, which you may begin to think rather tiresome, as I do; and I must tell you, for your comfort, that most other Spanish travellers think the same. However, with your youth, curiosity, and a little more practice in the language, you may easily, and even pleasantly, get over all their magnified difficulties. Though I do not intend to trouble you with many particulars, I will not promise that some reflections may not still interrupt our progress, and exercise your patience, for which you will have so much occasion here.

Of *Madrid*, the particulars I shall leave to other ample accounts, already published: it is now a tolerably clean country town, with

with some few good streets and buildings; but no pleasant environs: the moment you get without the gates, you may fancy yourself in a Spanish desert again. The king has an excellent collection of pictures in his new and magnificent palace: but you have, and will soon have more labour-ed accounts of all these things, by professed connoisseurs.

It must be allowed, that most princes now take some pains to encourage and revive the arts; but these do not seem to answer the call anywhere so readily as with you; and it gives pleasure to fancy and foresee them repairing to our island to increase and multiply, as to a better soil than they can now find in any other country. It would seem, that these great monarchs of the world have lost the secret of alluring or propagating them. I do not hear of any Spanish students above mediocrity. Wealth, security, then leisure, travel, and various motives, must conspire to produce a taste for the beauties of nature and the ancients. Princes do not  
seem



seem to know, that if all the arts and sciences were somehow, by chance or force, introduced into any country that is badly or despotically governed, and hence defective in security, they could not be fixed, or remain there, but would most probably disappear with the generation that introduced them.

This town of Madrid is not yet a very healthy place I believe, from what we can learn, and from the bilious fallow aguish appearance of its inhabitants: they are not in general a stout nor a handsome people, and have a certain look of secret discontent or resignation, or something between these, which is easier to observe than explain.

Though the Spaniards, in general, may not appear to you, at first, so handsome or good looking a people as some other of the more northern races, yet in other parts of the kingdom, you will find, after a little habit and examination, that they have a certain regularity and graceful strength of countenance beyond most other nations:

and that they have more bodily strength, vigour, and spirit, than their dry and meagre appearance may seem to indicate; and this will appear on the few occasions that occur to excite their exertion.

The *Escorial*—a romantic bold situation, on the hills that skirt the Guadarrama range of mountains. The building, in the bold and simple Doric, so uncommon and unexpected in such a country: yet, on the whole, I think it far beneath the degrees and effects of beauty and grandeur, which might be expected from so much labour and materials: and, as usual, this, and every thing in the country, seems doomed to be spoilt by something or other disagreeably melancholy, dirty, or mean: here, a number of small and broken windows; a want of repairs, and of cleanliness; an ugly weather-beaten kind of stone, &c. all contribute to give to the whole a triste and uninhabited appearance. The neglected state of the grounds and fences, the dulness of the court, and want of amusements, may strike one with Moorish

Moorish ideas and resemblances : but I do not mean to dwell much in or on palaces, and must again refer you to others.

We go on from the Escorial, ascending these Guadarrama mountains, and from the highest get a view of the great plains of Old Castile before us ; and look back upon those of the new, behind us, over Madrid, and far beyond it : both ways a grand and extensive, but not a very cheerful, prospect : a naked brown country during great part of the year. If I could chuse my party, I believe I should like better to examine these wild and romantic mountains than those half-peopled plains : all their mountains are full of interesting objects, and of sublime and beautiful scenes ; but they are few, and distant from each other.

I do not find much that is worth copying and considering from the *memoranda* of several journies through the now naked plains of Old Castile and Leon ; where there is, indeed, so little to be seen, besides some scattered flocks of sheep, and a few clay towns and villages, very thinly scattered,

scattered, full of dirt, poverty, and ruins, appearing as if lately burnt down : scarce a tree, or any thing green, to be seen during most of the year ; often in want of water, of timber, and of every thing comfortable ; only straw for fuel, beds, seats, &c. In some of the wool towns, *i. e.* where the wool is washed, we saw some houses with a few glass windows, as a very rare sight.

We found that those large flocks of sheep belong mostly to a few great proprietors, chiefly nobility, who live in Madrid, while their wretched and neglected country seems given up to waste, or to these few scattered flocks, and ragged solitary shepherds : but their management of wool and sheep, Spain has retained perhaps better than any other art ; and in its present state, is probably one of the fittest for producing wool, and if it must want water, there is much of it that can hardly be turned to any other use : for which reason I think it is not the country fittest for working up the wool, nor for many other operations that require great population and industry. The producing

ducing and the working up of materials, are not necessarily, nay are often incompatible, in the same country: a country of shepherds cannot be full of manufactures: some countries we find fit for one thing, and some for another; some to produce materials, others to fabricate them: and if each nation would be wise enough to keep to its own natural staple, it would doubtless be much better for the world at large. Yet they might, and would probably have some more manufactories in their towns here, if their government had any wisdom or goodness to refrain from taxing them, and to give sufficient security, liberty, toleration: or rather if they were to abolish this government, and create a new one. Of the present state of Spain, I hope you begin to form some general ideas, which I think are sufficient, and always the best, to begin with: a general notion of its natural history you may acquire from *Bowles*, and our good friend D. *Ign. Aso*, may shew you his subterraneous or mineralogic map of it. These extensive plains consist of other lesser ones,  
of



of different heights or levels, sinking suddenly by steep precipices, where two or three different strata appear, of several yards thickness each, all horizontal: the upper stratum visibly form the surrounding mountains, though at a great distance. Such is the make, and I think, a tolerable short description of this, and of several other great plains in the world.

Their chief towns lie among the skirts of the different mountains that almost surround this great plain, as Segovia, Valladolid, Burgos, Leon, Astorga (for accounts of which see Pontz). There, the country generally begins to be more varied, more interspersed with villages and cultivation, and we can see that it has formerly been still more so: ruins of villages, castles, and cultivation, may yet be traced: and in those cities, some melancholy remains of ancient magnificence still appear through their present ruins, filth, and poverty. Burgos I think one of the most interesting of these towns; it was formerly the residence of their princes. Some streets, consisting

consisting of old palaces of former nobility, appeared to be scarcely habitable, but we were told that they are still occupied by genteel families; poor gentry, of which this country has still some remains, too proud and too lazy to work.

There is scarcely any thing in tolerable order in Spain but their churches: the old cathedral here is one of their finest Gothic structures. Though the parts are of very different and capricious styles of architecture; the whole is noble without being heavy: but the Greek and the Gothic never join well, in my opinion, though the moderns are always attempting it, as here, and I think still without success. They tell us, this place is much improved since the wool duties began to be collected in it, and the export turned to St. Ander; it must then have been wretched indeed before that period.

Leon may have been, and might easily again be made a very fine city: situated on some small rivers, as they issue from the mountains to the north of it, and which form

form a noble back ground, with much fine country and good soil all around. Here is a charming convent or abbey, possessed by the priests of St. Jago: but Pontz will soon give us large accounts of all these.

They have, however, in these dry brown plains of Castile, sometimes tolerable crops of wheat, and of a good hard grain; but they attempt little or no other produce. Poverty, the church, and want of markets for their surplus produce, if they had any, are among their greatest, and are quite sufficient, obstacles to their improvement in agriculture. It would doubtless be difficult, and has hitherto been impossible, to open a communication sufficient to transport corn from these inland parts, which are shut up from the sea and from each other by mountains. The plans long in agitation, of roads and canals for these purposes, have not been formed with any adequate precision or knowledge of the subject or of the country, and are impracticable in its present state of population. They complain likewise of a want

and uncertainty of water and of crops ; but this was not always the case ; or at least not to so great a degree, when better planted and peopled. We know, that in former times corn has been exported from Spain, and that numerous armies and inhabitants have been supported in these now naked deserts ; there must then have been some mode of watering them, to a certain extent. Some Roman remains shew us one very good and simple method of watering certain districts, by forming large reservoirs, like lakes, of the streams as they issue from the mountains ; by great embankments at proper places ; and then by letting off the water in small channels to the lower grounds. This method is practised in Portugal, and there are some Roman works of this kind still in use near Merida and at Alicant ; and remains of them at other places. Such resources seem absolutely necessary to agriculture in the internal parts of this peninsula, where there is generally a want of rain during the summer and autumn quarters.

We can hardly judge, from the appearance of a country in its desert and uncultivated state, of what it may be capable, nor of its former appearance when cultivated and populous: even the necessary moisture of the soil may have disappeared from these plains with the trees and cultivation: in that state, some countries become gradually covered with sand, which would be prevented by annual tillage.

But all these obstacles of nature, which I suspect they exaggerate, might be considerably overcome, if those of mistaken policy and bad government were once removed. In short, I must frequently repeat my text, that the form of government, or of society, is of the first importance, however overlooked or mistaken by travellers, poets, or the people themselves. Our researches into the moral or political causes of national prosperity or decline, generally terminate there. Certain forms of government necessarily produce application, knowledge, wisdom, security, industry; and to these every thing is possible. Around



some of their towns, most of the lands to a good distance are in some sort of tillage, but they cannot afford to meliorate them, and must prefer plowing up badly more fresh land, to the labour and expence of improving the old. Both might be done under wise laws, and an equitable government ; the proprietors living more on their estates, disposing of them as they pleased, and sufficiently interested and secured in their produce and profits, the consequent increase of population, would conspire to overcome those obstacles of nature, and to extend and improve all the arts connected with the cultivation of the earth : the products would soon increase ; roads and canals might then be made by degrees : all these things would mutually assist each other ; their surplus would gradually find its way to distant markets, and new ones would appear at home.

## L E T T E R XXIII.

*Examples. Colonies and Companies. East  
Indies.*

To Mr. C.

**T**HOUGH it is very uncommon to wish to go twice the same route in this country, yet, if you were to tempt me with the party you mention, I could perhaps bear to examine it better; though, like many others, I often find myself getting gradually more out of humour with it, and more doubtful if any thing can be learned from hence of use to mankind, unless it be that of seeing and feeling, so to speak, more forcibly the numerous evil consequences of false policy, bad government, and a worse religion: lessons, to be sure, of the utmost importance to mankind, or to nations, and which cannot be too strongly enforced on them, if they could be taught to profit and take warning from the examples of their neighbours, and

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learn

learn from the experience of each other. The errors of other nations are not unknown to us. They have been observed and studied by some: but we seem only thereby more habituated and reconciled to them; more inclined to imitate, and to follow, than to avoid their fall. We, in particular, seem of late to be forgetting, that it is to the nature and form of our government we are indebted for our pre-eminence. The nations used to shew us to their tyrants and to their children, as something approaching to what a people and government ought to be; but we already begin to lose their respect and admiration. Since this mad and ruinous quarrel with our colonies, men seem to examine and to doubt the justice of your pretensions to superiority in liberty, sense, science, generosity, &c.; and see too clearly the tyranny and absurdity of any sovereignty or dominion of one people or nation over another.

The modern system of all-grasping commerce and colonization, you know, I hold  
to

to be destructive in the end: and if, in spite of the fatal examples of Spain and Portugal before our eyes, we should go on, and succeed in our wild and oppressive enterprises, of subduing and thence destroying those American colonies, or undertake the endless expence of subjugating and maintaining a set of slaves by way of customers, our future history and progress will probably resemble that of these countries; and if we were capable of taking and applying the examples, we could not find any better. Nay, if we retain only our Asiatic possessions, and turn our attention and exertions to the East, proportioned to our supposed losses in the West, endeavouring there to extend our power instead of our trade; forgetting our own maxims of leaving commerce alone, to find its own proper channels, its level, and its limits; the consequences may be equally fatal to us. The prize we shall be tempted to pursue there, is not probably of the right kind for us, being of too great a magnitude, and may become an object for ambition, enterprise, and extravagance, instead of

furnishing motives to that parsimonious industry which belongs to commerce: it may have the same effects on us, as South America has had on Spain; deceiving the people as to real and useful riches: and the contagion may reach to government itself, and gradually mislead and contaminate the whole nation,

Wherever there is a prospect of making fortunes suddenly and without much trouble, that part will soon be overstocked, and the gradual and industrious, the only useful method of acquiring wealth, will certainly be neglected. Hence depopulation and other numerous bad consequences ensue. Besides, it is to be feared, that a set of merchants must make but bad sovereigns, and then degenerate as merchants. The two characters are probably incompatible, and must mutually spoil each other. They will soon begin to lose by their trade, and then try to recover themselves by revenue and rapacity. Though our East India company has hitherto behaved much better in those situations than could have been expected, yet I hope we may not wait for the final result, to be convinced that the system is defective;  
that



that great companies and great conquests are generally real evils to a nation, and should never be admitted without absolute and obvious necessity; and even then, their proper establishment and control will require more wisdom and virtue than can perhaps be expected in any government, or even in human nature.

If the nation should become intoxicated with the spirit of conquest as well as rapacity, and our executive government at home acquire the management of such productive sources of wealth, and thereby get beyond the control of parliament, and of every other control that can then be found, it may be tempted and enabled to destroy our constitution in effect, though the form should remain.

For any one country to govern another well at a distance, is perhaps impossible: the few different modes that have been attempted, do not afford experience sufficient to decide on the best, or on the practicability of any. Though we have succeeded  
better

better than other nations, in the instance of our American colonies, chiefly by giving them our own constitution, and by the free enjoyment of which we might still have retained them; yet the same method will not probably answer for the East; and to attempt it by means of a company, can never, in my opinion, be the best way. A free and open trade, under a strong and respectable military government, if these two are compatible, I should think the best mode; raising the people who labour into more importance, by giving them better tenures of their lands, and some personal rights.—All this must be done by a proper choice of persons, more than by laws and regulations from home. The warrior and the trader are characters more compatible, and might be made to agree better than the world imagine. Among military men, while bred up in the habits of œconomy and the strict notions of honour, you will have perhaps the best chance to find some of liberal and upright characters, fit for the highest offices of trust and control; especially,

cially, if they themselves are under some control, and obliged to acquire information : for you must beware of the tyranny and the ignorance as yet too natural to the profession, till we adopt a proper military education.

If we examine history, we shall find that no nation of the West was ever yet much connected with the East, without injury to themselves, or could long retain the same character after, as before that connection. Of the great profits and fortunes, which will arise more from revenue and oppression than from fair commerce, much will come home. It might be proper to trace, if we could, the probable effects of that influx; how far it may increase the demand for labour and industry, or have contrary effects, and tend to raise prices, to increase luxury too fast, banish manufactories to cheaper countries, and thence depopulate and weaken the nation. Most of that which will be spent on horses, servants, parks, table, loose women, &c. will certainly act against industry, population, and  
national

national force; and with accelerating powers, by means of the ensuing change of manners and moral principles.

On the other hand, the fortunes so employed, may turn out to be a small part of the immense profits arising from that trade, which may likewise employ many useful hands both ashore and afloat, and such numbers of vessels. It would seem, that a wise government might do something towards diminishing the hurtful, and increasing the beneficial parts of that commerce and connection. If that trade should ever come to be laid open, wholesome competition may step in, to diminish profits, and render time and industry again more necessary to the making of fortunes. Much will depend on the number and disposition of these who come home with great riches; whether they injure or improve the country where they settle, by their Asiatic luxury; whether they can return to support, by their riches and example, all our old manners and political constitution; or by laughing at both, and shaming liberty and œconomy out of counte-



countenance, strengthen the growing party of the debauched and corrupted.

Should we not succeed against our colonies, and thence be forced to temper the extravagant ideas of our national power and glory, but be made to attend more to œconomy, to our home and European commerce, wisdom and moderation will be gained, and we may profit by the loss. We may be brought back to a better point of our national career than we were before, which was probably beyond the summit of power and prosperity; and these were already leading us down the other side of the hill, through arts, luxury, and indulgence. But if this is not found to be the consequence of our loss, I shall be inclined to fear that the blow will be too heavy, and the retrogradation too great to be recovered, and shall dread the mischievous dissensions that usually attend on ill success; hence weakness at home, and contempt from abroad, or hasty and inadequate remedies worse than the disorders. If you  
should



should persist too long in this ill humour, or mad fit of making war on your friends, and driving them into the scale of your enemies, and forsaking your old systems of alliances, you must, in the course of two or three successive wars, feel the loss and opposite weight of America, and must probably be brought down to the point which your natural enemy keeps so steadily in view for you.

## L E T T E R XXIV.

*Spanish Improvements. Roads. Canals.  
People. Laws. Languor.*

WE strangers and sojourners here are very apt to think we could easily improve this country. The first sight of it suggests the idea: and hence, perhaps, arose the proverbial saying, *Batir des châteaux en Espagne*. But from the little success of all those who have lately attempted it, we may presume that it is easier said than done. Various have been the proposals and attempts to improve it during this reign and the last. Both monarchs have set about it apparently in good earnest and on good principles; but that is not enough. The best and truest principles are not always applicable. The best of their plans, supposing them really in earnest, must always fail here in the execution. His present Majesty was right as to the necessity

cessity and the objects of reform, could he have found in his dominions enough of probity and practical abilities, riches and industry, to execute his intentions; but these were all wanting. He saw that the country required public assistance and public works, before it could begin to be improved; as roads, canals, water. But it seems none were found who knew how to begin or accomplish those improvements; none who could foresee that such things can be done here only upon a small scale, and by small beginnings, such as are within the ability of the country; and that they must be contented with mediocrity, or less perhaps, for a long time yet to come. They will have every thing at once great and magnificent; hence they fail in all, and finish nothing. Indeed it is probable that some secret French counsel is always at hand to lead them wrong.

No nation could more easily have tolerable roads across their great dry plains; a very little labour at some places would make them passable, and sufficiently good  
for

for the country and its present commerce: But they have hardly any roads, because they will have them better than ordinary; though there is so little to carry, that they cannot prevent the grass growing in the little bits already made. This government has been planning roads for these twenty or thirty years past, beginning and forsaking one impracticable project for another: too proud or jealous to imitate the wisdom and œconomy of the Bascongada provinces, or to give them up to provincial management, to the people who are more equal to the task, and the most concerned in the expence and execution. In all their plans they seem to insist on having them three times better and more expensive than necessary. The five or six principal roads leading to the capital, cannot, at their rate, be finished in less than fifty years, perhaps not in a hundred, and perhaps never. But in fifty years, the parts first made will have fallen to ruins; for they make no provision for repairs, nor could it be effectually appropriated if they did. Of the roads to the capital, the

few leagues already executed have cost nearly a million of reals *per* league. They seem already to stop, probably unable to go on with the expence. Suppose the rest to cost only half a million *per* league, the five or six, of one hundred leagues each, will cost three hundred millions. They can never probably afford five millions *per annum*, which makes it sixty years to finish these few only. There are others equally necessary ; as likewise *posadas*, or inns, for the accommodation of travellers ; for if government will not build these, or encourage and assist in doing it, none else will.

At first sight, most of this level country of Old Castile seems capable of canals as well as of roads, and that they might be fed by the different streams that form the Douro. That river, as you may see by the map, receives the waters of a great extent of country, from all the surrounding mountains of Castile, Leon, Asturias, &c. which inclose a very extensive valley. But an accurate knowledge of the country, of its produce and materials, would be necessary



to determine the practicability of canals. I doubt they cannot soon have any thing to carry that will pay the expence: straw, though the most likely to answer the purpose, will yet be quite insufficient.

Such great public works, as before observed, would require a far greater degree of population and internal commerce; something to be carried of bulk and importance, of an increasing demand, sufficient to pay the expence of making and repairs, which will both be great: and they have more roads and canals already planned and begun in Spain, than the most populous and industrious nation could execute: so little do they know their own strength. It is from the great body of the people that all must come, both the expence and the labour: but they must first be taught to feel their own importance, and be sure of the fruits of their industry, before they will undertake any thing of consequence. They must be in the habits of managing the affairs of their own little districts: provincial and municipal business

and jurisdictions should be re-established and extended, instead of being gradually curtailed and taken away, as has been long the practice of their government, particularly since the Bourbon accession. Indeed the privileges and importance of the people have of course declined ever since their Cortes or Parliament was prevailed on to grant to Charles V. the supplies before the redress of grievances.

All societies or governments are naturally slow and tedious in their progress, as if unwilling to change established customs, though absurd or pernicious; even despotism herself can only go a certain pace; and as indolence often accompanies power, she is frequently the slowest of all. Many things might otherwise have been expected of this government, and they would, ere now, have got through the whole, and have taken away the old privileges of all the particular districts and townships: but they have still left some, as if to increase the confusion. There is more diversity of laws and customs throughout this kingdom than  
even

even in France, or almost any other. Their different *fueros*, *consejos*, *tribunales*, are great plagues to themselves, and to others who have any thing to do with them. But that is not the worst part of their jurisprudence ; for it is perhaps proper, that law, in some cases, should cost both trouble and expence. The great evil here is the want of justice and of decision : indeed there are seldom any hopes of either : as they are only to be procured through an immensity of corruption and delay, all ideas of justice, right, or recovery, are often given up, without attempting a redress or remedy by law, which, in most cases, is known to be so much worse than to suffer the evil. So that it is difficult to conceive how so many people of the law can live here. They must, like the inn-keepers on their roads, proportionally fleece the few who fall into their hands,

In short, an eternal delay, languor, and indifference, as well as corruption, seem to pervade every rank and every species of business, and to have seized the

nation in general, and law and government most of all. The consequences, you will readily conceive, must be, universal want of credit and confidence between man and man, and hence of commerce, industry, arts, &c. Each must live perpetually on his guard, as if surrounded by enemies. Hence, in this state of society, the value, the esteem, and frequent use for private friendships, and the remarkable fidelity of some, for which, you know, this nation has long been renowned; and hence the frequent assassinations, and other points of their manners and customs, might be deduced. But it is wonderful that the people in general are so good as we find them to be; and we are led to respect the moral character that can refrain from so much wickedness as might here be perpetrated with impunity.

You need not wonder at this extreme national depression, nor fancy the picture *outrè*. On closer examination, perhaps, we should find there were always more of those defects in the character of their government,

vernment, particularly since they lost their Cortes, than could reach the page of the historian, who seldom gets at the bottom of things. We know they have fallen from a great height; and the world is but too full of instances of the weakness and total relaxation of the human mind, when once debased by oppression.



## L E T T E R XXV.

*Tolls. Mountains. Mauragatos. Galicia,  
St. Jago. Societies. Commerce.*

St. Jago.

WE find something like the old tolls and exactions of the feudal barons, still existing in some parts of the Spanish monarchy. We came to an inn on the road belonging to the duke of Alva, and then to another belonging to the king, both let at a rack-rent six times above the real value. This rent, and some profit, must be extorted from the few travellers that call there. One is apt to conclude, *que le mal est sans remede*. Who can be expected to have any regard for the good of society, if the first characters in it can do these things?

The present prime minister has, it seems, undertaken the roads too; we shall soon see with what success. He has already, as is usual

usual here, raised the public hopes too high. I hear he talks of depending partly on tolls, which will be distressing and ineffectual, where there are few travellers, and so little internal commerce: but, I think, he may probably have the sense to be contented with mediocrity, and may then succeed better than any of his predecessors.

We now go on towards *Toro* and *Astorga*, and there approach another noble range of mountains, which turns to the south from those of Asturias, and partly divide Galicia and Portugal from Spain. Here green hills, wood, water, population, and many beauties, again appear, and seem doubly grateful to the sight, so long wearied with naked brown plains, and sky.

Part of these fine mountains is inhabited by the *Mauragatos*, who are probably some remnant of a Moorish or mixed race. They have retained a dress and manners different from the other Spaniards, but not any peculiar language, as I could learn. They are very industrious, and join the  
three

three different professions of farmer, carrier, and merchant, which answers well enough for the rude state of society in Spain. They execute all three with a more liberal spirit, with more skill and industry, than usual in this country. Their numerous cattle answer very well for this treble purpose. Tolerable farmers, they have improved and beautified several parts of these mountains. Rich and adventurous merchants, they are in great reputation for probity and fair dealing, buying whole cargoes at Coruña. They still obstinately retain their ancient mean dress, consisting chiefly of skins; and intermarry, I believe, only with each other. They may increase, and may improve the country still more, if they can escape oppression; but that is what cannot long be expected under this government, especially if they appear to prosper. Some of them suffered by lending money to Philip V. Charles III. promised, and began to pay it, but has stopped short at one-fifth of the debt.

There

There are fine and singular scenes and beauties of nature, in these western mountains of Galicia: and they are tolerably peopled, though only by Gallegos, who are, to be sure, but a poor miserable-looking race: docile, obedient, mean, and ragged creatures; something like the poor Jews at Gibraltar. In these northern provinces, and in Catalonia, Spain might probably find colonists enough for their mountainous and desert countries. Taking them by degrees, would not depopulate those. Intermarrying and mixing different races, and modes of industry, might have some good effects. Here are several iron-works; and coal has been lately discovered in these mountains, but they say it is not of a good kind: perhaps not till they get down to the next stratum.

There are some tolerably good wines produced on the internal hills of this range, as about Toro, &c. Spain might have great variety of excellent wines. They are surely improvable, being generally strong, with a good body, and some have already a fine flavour: but taste depends  
much

much on habit. There is perhaps nothing the Spaniards could learn from their new friends the French, of more importance than the improvement of their wines, about which they are now as careless and indifferent as about every thing else.

Having returned by this road, and seen more of those northern countries, I must dwell a little longer on this kingdom of Galicia, as they style it. I find it consists perhaps rather more of mountains than of plains or vales; yet almost all is cultivated, or made some use of, though it might be of much more. Even in the worst parts we find timber, water, poor cattle, and some ragged people. It is a country fit to produce cattle and men; and for these two important objects, government should promote and give up other considerations. They could perhaps double the number of their cattle, and improve the breed, only by cultivating grass and making hay. They might then salt beef for the navy, and send more cattle to Castile. They would thus soon increase their population, their milk, butter, cheese, tallow, hides, candles, tanneries,



tanneries; timber, and workmen of various kinds.

There are waste lands still in the central parts of this province. However, if the others were peopled and cultivated as this is, Spain would still be a great nation. If the great proprietors could be made to live on their estates, to give long leases, or *foros* like these, and sell them when they liked, it would probably improve and aggrandise the nation more than all their colonies and commerce.

You must trust to my judgment, and other accidents, in selecting a few more of my desultory and unconnected memorandums; and first such as occurred at St. Jago a second time. It is astonishing how so many rich churches and convents can be supported in such a poor country: almost half the summer as yet consists of holidays, though several have been lately struck out of the calendar.

We have had more things stolen from us, and recovered some in the usual way,  
and

and have seen other indications of the impossibility of any police or justice in the present state of this country. We have seen a large proportion of the few things recovered, go to the Confessor's convent for the merits of the discovery.—Shocking bad travelling even in the best parts. Neither roads, inns, nor tolerable workmen in any trade, to be found; but plenty of customhouses, and their officers, every where, to torment every passenger. And yet there is more smuggling in this country than any where else. Many churches, and many beggars; these generally go together.

Justice, law, and every person thereunto belonging, are more dreaded than the thief or assassin, who are far more favourite characters with the populace in Spain; murderers are generally assisted by the people to escape. There is little or no police any where, except in some of their mercantile ports, and for which they are indebted to the strangers and men of business there.

The

The pilgrimage to St. Jago, though much diminished, still occasions great idleness and disorder during summer. A plough here costs about 4*s.* 6*d.*: all the work of a water-mill about 9*s.* But a cart costs 3*l.* 10*s.* These trifles will help you to judge of this nation; and for brevity, you will excuse the comment.

There are many pleasant green vallies, pretty well planted and cultivated, in the south parts of Galicia; but very dirty brown villages, built of clay or loose stones, without lime, which is a great defect in this and several other parts of Spain.

Here, the riches of the clergy have some good effects. We meet with some grass lands, tolerable cattle, good bread, and fish markets, and a few country houses. The church, yet more powerful than the state, has detained so much riches from the rapacity of government, and kept it in the country. The clergy, who will always live well, generally make a good market.  
But

But every public concern is shamefully neglected except the church. Yet the famous cathedral here, is but a melancholy dungeon, with all its riches and ornaments. Even the Grecian orders of architecture add little beauty in the hands of negligent and unskilful workmen. Their streets and best buildings are mostly in a ruinous and dirty condition, and built in a barbarous taste. There is some good Gothic architecture in an hospital; and some good bold Doric about St. Martin's. But the best thing here is their church music, which is frequently very fine, both as to composition and performance, by some good voices and instrumental performers.

In this, and in all their other universities, Newton, and modern philosophy, is still prohibited. Nothing can supplant Aristotle, and the superstitious fathers and doctors of the church. Some young students here narrowly escaped the Inquisition by endeavouring to procure lectures on experimental philosophy in the modern style. But there was a ragged boy lately raised to  
be

be a canon of the church by the king, for having saved the host or consecrated wafer from the fire, at the burning of a chapel.

You may have heard of the gradual decline of the different societies in Spain for encouraging arts and trade, which had been established in the present reign, with such sanguine hopes, by *los amigos del país*. Such societies have not had all the effects expected from them anywhere, and still less in this country. It is plain, they have not been encouraged of late by government, notwithstanding its early professions of protection. Some of those societies were instituted by good men, who are now mostly dead or disgraced, and the institutions follow the fate of their founders. The few that can barely be said to remain, through the influence of the clergy, who take the lead in every thing, are become the dispensers of small premiums to little schoolmasters for teaching little children their catechism. If the church must direct the opinions of men, and government only their actions, it is easy to



foresee which, in the end, must govern. How can we separate things which nature has connected? We should perhaps except from this general state of decline, the Bascongada society, where one liberal mind creates others, and as yet supports his society, and some of the useful arts, up to a kind of infant progress. Those *Biscainos* wish for every kind of commerce and communication with the English, but it has been hitherto rendered impracticable by means of their clergy and their Bourbon government. The Spaniards, I find, everywhere complain, and we all feel the want of many articles of English wares, which used formerly to be common in Spain. They are not now nearly so well supplied from Germany, Holland, and France, as they used to be from England. This change in trade may be partly accounted for, from their secret Bourbon enmity and prohibitory laws; but we must ourselves probably bear a share of the blame. Are we not becoming too great and too proud for the retail business? If so everywhere, we are too far gone in pride and luxury, and our  
com-

commercial importance will thence die away, and after stalking on for a time, as the ghost of its former greatness, or as a bubble supported on the remains of ideal power and credit, it will disappear with these—let us hope not yet entirely, nor irrecoverably. The great must consist of many littles or parts: the industry of œconomy and detail must still exist somewhere, in order to support our wholesale greatness. Better retain as many as possible of those lesser component parts of trade in English hands: the retails cannot so well be supplied by the small capitals, skill, or the interests of any people in these countries, though furnished by all the riders or commission-hunters you can ever spare. Your merchants, both wholesale and retail, though only the third or fourth class as to importance in the state, are, however, necessary links in this chain, and must come between the manufacturer and the stranger. By such œconomical attentions, Great Britain and Ireland might yet supply all Europe with several articles, better and cheaper than their respective nations ever

can. I would have at least one English warehouse, or store, supported by our own subjects and capitals, in every great town in Europe. But nations, or rather their foolish governments, seem daily more bent on shutting each other out, and on obstructing the communication and natural liberty of mankind throughout the world. The duties on English imports, in this and several other countries, I am told, amount often to thirty, and even forty *per cent.* which, if rigidly levied, would amount to a prohibition; towards which, indeed, our trade seems here gradually approaching. This mistaken commercial jealousy and unnatural animosity seems to go on increasing; one foolish prohibition produces many more: nations retaliate their follies on each other; and we do not see where it all can end, unless in a state of perpetual warfare and barbarism once more. May not we hope, in time, to see wise ministers teaching their nations to open their eyes to their own interest, and more liberally to open their trade to each other, and impart mutual assistance, wealth, and industry? Though  
this

this kingdom may not be the first to venture, if others would begin, she may be obliged to follow. *Con todo il mundo guerra y paz con Inglaterra*, is one of the justest of their old proverbial sayings, though the Bourbons have now invented others of a contrary meaning. With no other country can Spain and Portugal trade with more advantage than with England.

## L E T T E R XXVI.

*The Peninsula of Spain, and its Inhabitants.*

LET us look back, and take another cursory view of this peninsula before we leave it. If we consider its situation, climate, soil, coast, we must see it is capable of becoming one of the first countries in the world, if properly governed; though in that case it would perhaps be too powerful, and might domineer and govern all the rest. Its plains and its mountains, its surface and its mines, might again be made to produce most of the things wanted by man, and provide a sufficient overplus to purchase the rest, which is perhaps better than possessing all. Though its interior provinces contain much dry and barren land, and do not communicate well with the sea, nor with one another, those impediments of nature, though now increased or neglected, might be partly overcome or mitigated,



mitigated. Though its rivers do not all carry the advantages of internal navigation far into the country, being obstructed by currents and falls, as usual in their passage through the mountains, some of them are navigable a considerable distance, and might be extended. It has been thought, that Old Castile might be made to communicate by canals with the Minho, towards some of its sources, and thence with the sea; and likewise through some vallies of the northern range of mountains, near St. Ander, or Villaviciosa; and New Castile, with the Guadalquivir, through some part of Sierra Morena; likewise New Castile, Estremadura, &c. by means of the Tagus and Guadiana, might perhaps in time be connected with the sea. A great part of Aragon might be made to communicate with the Mediterranean, and inland places with each other, by means of the Ebro; and much of Andalusia by the Guadalquivir. These points are highly worthy the attention of Spain, and of being well examined by men of real science and local knowledge, and not merely by French quacks.

Though they cannot now think of executing such projects, with their present degree of population and kind of government, the very idea might help to improve both. Though it should be doubted if the Guadiana, the Tagus, the Douro, or the Minho, could be made to carry to the sea the produce of the provinces of Spain through which they pass, they might, in some parts, furnish the means of internal communication, and of watering the country. These rivers are of essential service to Portugal, and might be made to render still more. Commerce, industry, and a high population, can do wonders in such works. In some parts of Portugal, small channels have already been carried far along the hills for watering the lower country: perhaps some of these might be enlarged, so as to form canals, and join the great rivers for inland navigation. The same might probably be done with those we see cut for mill-streams in the high banks or precipices along those rivers, as they pass the high country. In this small way, some beginnings might even now be made.

You

You may have heard of the principal canals projected and begun in Spain having already failed in the execution, and in their funds: some, from the mismanagement of French quack engineers, numbers of such being always ready here to undertake every thing. The Dutch and other subscribers to these canals must probably lose their capital; and the interest, a burden on the king, cannot be very secure beyond the present reign. We saw, the year before last, the beginning of a canal near Palencia in Old Castile: but there must yet be so little there to be carried on it, only some straw and corn, that I can easily believe it must be given up, or left unfinished, as I then foretold. The Murcia canal, I hear, was found to have too little water in summer, and in winter too much. I have not heard what made them give up that at Zaragoza. Their hopes of watering any considerable extent of country by that means, must fail, from the scarcity of water when most wanted, and their unskilful methods of supplying it. All these canal schemes, begun upon too great a scale for  
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the country, had always, to me, too much the appearance of *bubbles* and deception; as yet impracticable and inadequate both as to the means and the objects. They never will understand gradation and moderation in their public schemes.

Of the inhabitants of this country let us also take another slight view. Notwithstanding the naked, brown, and miserable look of these great plains, especially during summer, yet animal life, in general, is perhaps of a character capable of more vigour and energy, than on the other side of the Pyrenees, when not depressed by want, indolence, or oppression, which is, however, too often the case.

Their straw and barley are probably as hearty food for cattle as our hay and corn. Though the country produces few of the comforts of life, these few are good of their kind. Though these arid wastes may strike us at first with a kind of horror, yet when we perceive that they produce such good wine, corn, straw, and cattle, though in quantities comparatively small, we are gradually



gradually more reconciled even to the appearance of the country, and might probably, by habit, be brought to like it as well as the natives, and might learn, like them, to enjoy basking and sleeping on dust instead of grass.

I think the Spaniards are naturally a bold, a cool, a spirited, and clear-headed race of people: and I see nothing in their original character very incompatible with the progress of industry and improvement, which elsewhere seems natural to men in society. They are still capable of great activity on certain occasions, though perhaps generally averse to continued labour. However, I have observed that some of their tradesmen, as smiths, muleteers, and others, labour hard and with continuance; and we should think that others might be induced to do the same, by equal motives. Their soldiers, bull-fighters, messengers, are capable of great efforts occasionally. Though the motives of necessity are not so powerful in warm climates as in cold; as the former relax and debilitate the  
human



human frame, diminish the necessity to labour, with the number of our wants, and more easily supply the remainder ; yet we know that human arts and industry have been planted and have prospered in almost all climates ; and hence it appears, that there are moral motives to be found sufficient to overcome most of the impediments of nature.

All this leads to the usual text and conclusion,—That these people might again exert themselves, and emerge from their present poverty, indolence, and political insignificance, if they were properly governed. But any reform is now become very improbable: not many of them can even be convinced that it is necessary, nor be made thoroughly sensible of their fall, and are still farther from the principles on which their recovery depends. I think they may long remain nearly as they are, a standing lesson for other nations ; more subject, from various accidents, to decline still farther, than with any reasonable hopes ever to rise again to their former character and eminence.

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The most interesting parts of their history, the causes of their decline, have been often investigated, even before Montesquieu displayed them in his concise and demonstrative manner. I think their present wretched government and religion have had the greatest share in producing their present character, and in hastening their downfall; perhaps we might trace the causes to that which gave them first too much of the religious, and then of the military, spirit; and hence that of conquest which, by success, is naturally turned into rapacity, cruelty, and plunder, and at last exhausting itself, dies by indulgence, like every other extreme of human passions and pursuits, leaving only the *caput mortuum* of the human character, which is here indolence and indifference, mixed up with pride and devotion.

Their colonies have not, I think, as you suppose, depopulated Spain by emigration, so much as by turning the attention of the people from home to distant objects; from useful arts and industry, to a disposition for  
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enterprise and adventure, and all the idleness of running after good luck; but a wise government at home would soon have replenished all the emigrations. At a period of religious and military ardour, already carried too far, a great object for both is discovered, which carries them still farther. From thence it is easy to trace the progress and effects of their mistaken ideas of riches, of their idleness and gradual decay. Their most pernicious emigration was, doubtless, the expulsion of the Moors and Jews by Philip II. and III., as they carried away so many useful hands and some entire trades. But that was only one of the numerous bad consequences of their broken government and fanatical religion, the primary sources of so many evils, and which may yet go on, for ages to come, to produce many more. Their religious prejudices are probably the most powerful cause of their depression, and have more extensive consequences than is generally imagined. Few subjects escape their influence: like a contagious poison, they spread through, and contaminate all that concerns

concerns mankind, raise some unexpected barrier against every alteration of importance, and keep them at enmity with half the world, and its improvements.

We know that a change of situation will often change the characters of men : and that the worst of our subjects have sometimes been reformed, when transported to our colonies. A distance from home, new occupations, even a crossing the line, has often been observed to produce some change in men's moral ideas, and to cancel some distinctions of conventional behaviour. A shipwreck, or any extreme common danger, presently levels all ranks and distinctions. Hence it is obvious, that the government that could create circumstances and occasions, that could direct education and manners, might give men such habits, and make of them what they pleased.

But it would be like working without materials, to attempt making a people great, without great objects and motives to exertion both at home and abroad. Though this nation has probably been generally  
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somewhat over-rated or mistaken, and from situation been little known, and of a character so respectable, and proper to favour the imposition; yet we know they once stood much higher than at present, and produced men of characters to be admired and imitated: but that was when they had grand national views and objects of employ, and constant intercourse with Flanders, Germany, Italy; from which arose various incitements to exertions in arms, letters, industry. With a warm emulation, they then followed close, and tried to keep pace with Italy in learning and taste: and in arms they led the way, and gave law to Europe. But when they ceased to contend and to act with their equals and neighbours, from being exhausted, they became still more incapable of it by disuse: and since they shrunk within themselves, and from false and impracticable ideas of independence on other nations, were engrossed by their wasting colonies, they have dwindled away to what we see; have sunk into apathy and idleness, and have become, of course, unfit for



for all those things in which they have not been employed; and now under a government, that probably from policy keeps them down, and holds them at a distance from their own national affairs, there they must probably long remain.

We may often find something in the nature of a country that will account for many parts of the history and character of the people. Even the geographical station, independent of climate, may have a decided influence on national dispositions and events. From our insular position may proceed much of our character and government. The separate situation of this peninsula may have contributed to suggest, and to indulge their ideas and habits of pride and indolence, and of a separate and independent manner of political existence. But for this the country is perhaps less adapted than most others; consisting chiefly of a few large arid plains, and ranges of mountains, which communicate badly with each other, and which were never probably internally commercial,

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well calculated for mutual assistance, nor very well peopled ; nor productive, except upon their few rivers. Thence might be traced some of the causes of their internal divisions ; of their frequent decline, and of their falling so often into a dependence on other nations, as we see in their history ; successively on Phenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Goths, Saracens, and now on the French.

To keep such a people up to all the energy of character and activity of industry, requisite to its being a great and independent nation, and to preserve it in a state of cultivation, every human motive to exertion is probably necessary. Without freedom and security, arts and commerce, and a constant intercourse and competition with other countries, we cannot expect them to rise, by any means within the powers or nature of their present government, near to their former state of greatness. Without freedom and good government, foreign wars and commerce, even our own island would probably soon revert

to its former barbarity and political insignificance. You know how improbable and impracticable I think their recovery, and I have perhaps already enumerated reasons enough for that opinion; but you must have them as they occur. Any one who knows the people of Spain will readily conceive how very unequal the present race would be to execute the functions, to assert or maintain the rights, of their former constitution of government. When people arrive at certain degrees of sloth and indifference, it becomes doubly difficult to find motives that have any influence with them. How can we teach him who will not learn; or improve those whose taste and judgment, natural and moral, are so vitiated as to have reversed the order of nature? where some of the most useful occupations of men are disgraceful, while that of begging, and even of assassination, are not so? where they have lost their relish for the beauties of nature, and for the comforts of life, many preferring dirt to cleanliness, and indolence with want to industry with all its comforts and conveni-

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encies ; where most of the country people hate the sight of trees, and have a dislike to milk, greens, and the other simple and original kinds of food, their palates being spoiled by indulging the factitious taste for garlick, onions, peppers, and high seasonings. Man is the creature of habit. When, from want, oppression, or indulgence, he abandons, or gets beyond the first simple feelings or instincts of nature, there seem no natural bounds or limits left to stop his gradually destroying his senses, his mind, and his whole self. He may then go on, till he learn to drink alcohol, to eat assafoetida, or do mischief, for pleasure, till the whole animal is spoiled or annihilated.

The great object of desire seems here a long and lazy life ; whereas the short and active has generally been of most service to mankind, and more suited to society. We may instance Alexander, Raphael, and many others. If the youth, at least, of a country cannot be made to love activity and danger, I fear there is small hope of that country. Hardly any thing seems now  
capable



capable of exciting this people to great efforts, except their superstitious terrors, love, revenge, or a fandango. You are aware that we must not conclude all are so far sunk in indolence and indifference; but I fear this character is general enough to consider the others as exceptions. To such a state has a bad government reduced the first people in Europe.



## L E T T E R XXVII.

*On Government.*

To Mr. A. J.

**I** DO not disapprove of your indulging a little in speculations upon government and politics; it may induce you to go on with history, law, travel, &c. all which lead to other useful researches. The utility of my letters and opinions will consist, I hope, more in the efforts of thought and research they may produce in you, than in the actual information they may contain. Nor do I wish to discourage your disposition to perpetual reform and improvement, which is natural to young and ardent minds; the world will soon enough repress that zeal. I agree with you, that the art of government has long been stationary, and perhaps often retrograde, and might have been expected to be

be much farther advanced than we find it. When we consider the progress it once made among the Greeks, we cannot easily account for its subsequent decline. Without being too sanguine or romantic, we may be permitted to hope for degrees of political skill and wisdom, and for some future lawgiver, more perfect than any that have been yet seen in the world. May we not expect, that this great art will now advance in an accelerated progression, by means of England, and English America? We may now look for some system that shall comprehend at once the principles of duration and improvement, so as to keep pace with the other arts. The best systems of government hitherto known have been like the machines that require to be wound up at certain periods: every revolution contains the seeds of others. We ought to look well into history, and see if we should not first try to equal some of the ancient governments, before we pretend to surpass them. Some allege we cannot go much farther. The most perfect system would doubtless, in the execution, still

favour of the imperfection of man, so weak a being, and so easily spoiled by power, or any other indulgence. By perfection must be understood the best possible system for man, with all his defects; and I think we have not yet discovered on what it depends: the discovery may require more ages of experience, and be found very simple at last.

I am inclined to believe the most perfect system may be found to depend chiefly on three points: 1. On good education; 2. Equal representation; and 3. Mutual control. We have, in England, succeeded tolerably well in the third of these, though not so well in the two former. But every man who thinks, must have his own system, and we can seldom agree; a necessary evil, perhaps the most difficult of all to be remedied. However, to fill up part of my system, and establish a government that should improve, instead of declining as usual, I think the following conditions necessary. 1. A security in the form of constitution, that every law will  
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be the real sentiment of a majority of the whole community, and not of a small part only. 2. I must have a proper distribution of power among persons and corporate bodies, so that they may all both assist and control each other; some of them changeable, and others fixed, with right rotation for the first, and proper limitations for both. In this distribution may consist the secret of the whole science of legislation. A right division of the public labour, between corporate bodies and individuals, and which should bring all the powers of both sexes into action, might go farther than we can now even imagine. Society seems to fall almost naturally into a division of three classes; a first, middle, and lower; and hence the legislature, almost as naturally, into those of a monarch, a senate, and commons by representation: three powers, at least, being necessary to preserve a balance by mutual control. This once established, all the rest, as wisdom, knowledge, virtue, seem to flow from it in course: public and private life, government and education, will then form but one



one great school, and will all equally contribute to produce the kinds of merit the most wanted: fixed and temporary laws will be well distinguished: in short, the result of all the best speculations and theories upon government seems to demonstrate our own to be the nearest perfection; and perhaps we have only to remove the defects above mentioned, in education and representation, in order to form the best government possible.

There will then probably be wisdom enough to render the education of all ranks somewhat military; this I think indispensable, and believe that no government can be lasting where the people have lost the use of arms. While they retain their martial habits, it may indeed require more judgment and attention to direct them, than most governments are able or willing to bestow, until they shall become better constituted, so as to produce the necessary skill, zeal, and assiduity; then the task becomes easy. A regiment is ruled with facility, a mob is ungovernable: a certain method and form of arrangement produces a constant attention in the executive operations in a regiment,



ment, or a nation: the people become thence not less, but more capable of order, obedience, and regularity, and might therefore more safely be trusted with liberty, and influence enough to support the exertions and the self-importance so necessary even in the lowest classes of a great and military nation.

Since the great improvements and division of arts and labour, and their engrossing the whole time and attention of the workmen, the people in most countries have readily agreed to be taxed in order to pay for their defence, in preference to the privilege of defending themselves: they thereby gave up, at once, all their remaining security in any rights, civil or political, which will be gradually infringed by their rulers, who are no longer under the constant necessity of attending to the interests of a people without property or military talents, and hence without influence. Such governments will degenerate into despotism, then insensibly decline, and at last fall a prey to the first free and warlike nation that may attack them in a few

few successive wars: such seems to be the circle of our policy, arts, commerce, and, in short, of human nature. Your remedy of representation came in good time to keep up, or rather raise, for a time the importance of the people; but to support it, will require more arrangements civil and military. Let us hope the martial spirit will spread and take root among us, and that a general circulating militia, in which all serve in their turn, will at length be established, so as to supply a small but well-disciplined army, and render the people more military and more orderly.

Since you lead me into these matters, I know not how to leave them, though I wish to be concise. I think we are more readily inclined to reflect and talk upon government in the countries where it is worst; and this country affords a variety of subjects for such reflections. To make the indolent become active and industrious, I think their wants must be increased. In the finest countries and climates, such as this of Spain, where their wants are few, and those few easily supplied, we find the  
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inhabitants the most helpless and inactive. Kingdoms, however, seem equally doomed to perish by the opposite progression, first of an industrious, and then a rapacious avarice. When the love of riches has been once awakened, and sufficiently exercised, it should be restrained and regulated, and on the wisdom of such regulations much of the prosperity and duration of empires will depend. But modern governments, on the contrary, our own not excepted, are building on the foundation of pecuniary interest an immense and increasing structure, which at last may fall by its own weight, like that of Spain. We feed and encourage, instead of mitigating and diverting, the love of power and of riches, till they become enormous and uncontrollable. Though in some countries merit may by stealth creep into notice and power, it must in time be entirely sacrificed to riches. The easy alienation and circulation of great fortunes, and the proper division of large estates, are almost everywhere impeded, and the accumulation of them promoted, by partial

partial and pernicious laws and customs. This is remarkably the case here, where a few grandees may, in time, engross all the great titles and estates of the kingdom: the duke of Alva already possesses eleven dukedoms (*sombreros* or *grandezas*); the duke of Medina Cæli, the Conde de Altamira, &c. have each acquired several by inheritance. Through most part of Europe property seems to be getting into fewer hands, and thence more within the reach of government, which is consequently the more inclined and enabled to become despotic, by combinations of the few against the many. There have been variations in this progression, according as chance or wisdom have directed: human knowledge and foresight may, in some cases, have had an influence on the duration and prosperity of empires. In a general tendency towards oppression, though the people have often possessed the bare necessities of life on no better tenure than so far as they could be useful to their oppressors, that tenure has gradually become, on some occasions, a tolerably good one. Luxury, by creating  
wants,



wants, has increased the demand for the labour and ingenuity of the people: it has tempted the rich to spend and to sell their estates, and enabled the industrious to buy them, promoting a better division and circulation of property. As far as those people have been able to protect and preserve their industry and their influence, by a proper temperament of freedom and security, by a wise and well-balanced constitution of government, so far the superior fruits of their industry have appeared, increased, and produced a spirit of some independence for its own support. This may be called the purse-proud spirit of commerce and riches; it may give rise to improvements yet unseen, and continue to swell till it bursts, and share the fate of all human pursuits when not sufficiently kept within bounds. We do not indeed seem clearly to have determined the merits and effects of this modern system of industry and avarice, nor to have measured or compared it with that of the ancient spirit of poverty, independence, and vigour of mind: men of books admire the latter, men of



the world the former, and each laughs at the other. Though this modern spirit of arts and commerce seems capable of supplying the place of every thing, and almost of virtue itself, we may however be permitted to doubt of its omnipotence whenever it shall have the other to contend with. It was foreseen, that Carthage, with all its riches and mercenary armies, must at length be overcome by the spirit and perseverance of the Roman republic. The arts and sciences cannot gain a situation that will ensure their own existence and duration, till the art of government shall have made a progress equal to the rest. The force of modern European nations is now computed by pounds, shillings, and pence; and in their contentions the richest generally prevail: but this may not always be the case. Were it not for the art of fortification, even now an army of Tartar horse, directed by a Tamerlane or an Alexander, might, by repeated attempts, reduce Europe once more to a barbarous desert, and bury all her arts and improvements in oblivion. After a certain  
progress

progress of tyranny, and the division of the world again among a few overgrown and ignorant tyrants, it may require only the caprice or mistake of some one of them, to prepare Europe for such an event; while the science and wisdom, the virtue and interest, of all the rest of mankind, remain without power or influence. The carrying any specious system of policy to an extreme, such as the disuse of fortifications and of militias, may be sufficient to prevent or impede the efficacy of your superior arts and strength, and at once lay you open to such a disaster.

I do not mean to represent the people in France or Spain, as in much danger from the spirit of commerce and luxury: benevolence would wish they were: they are probably past that period, and incapable, without more property and arrangement, of recovering their influence. In these governments, democracy must now be out of the question, and the future contentions will only be between the monarchic and aristocratic oppressors. The poverty and dependence of the people are every-

where too evident: their dangers and depression proceed more from feudal tyranny than commercial luxury. You know the powers and oppressive privileges of their nobility and clergy, though the latter are considered as pretty good landlords: that their estates do not improve so much as they ought, is perhaps more owing to their being too indulgent than too rigid masters, and to their being only proprietors for life.

Some laws, like those in Holland and elsewhere, that promote the division of great estates, and facilitate this alienation, if they could be generally adopted, might obviate the dangers of those too great accumulations and inequalities, without checking too much of that passion for riches, and the family pride, which sometimes produce beneficial effects. Such laws might help to save Europe from those misfortunes which we have presumed to foresee.

## L E T T E R XXVIII.

*Spanish ancient Government. Decline. Character. Peculiarities. Edicts, and want of Confidence.*

To Mr. C.

St. Jago.

MANY clear-headed sensible men we meet with in this country belong to the law; that profession seems to produce the most freedom, learning, eloquence, and the kind of knowledge chiefly wanted in this nation. From some of these, you will meet with more satisfactory information concerning the actual state of their government and constitution, than you can acquire from any books; yet it may be proper to draw from both sources. Though such men cannot now be of much service to a nation where both church and state are against every reform

or advancement, at some future period they may, if sufficiently honest and numerous, be of infinite use to it. Nor do I think this nation so thoroughly incapable of reform as the French. If they can once be moved to set about a revolution upon system, they will be found more equal to the task. There may be some hope in the tyranny and absurdity of their government: these being carried to extremes in enlightened times, may create some regulated resistance, as formerly in Flanders, and as was lately very nearly the case at Madrid; and this might grow into a systematic opposition, and produce a balanced government as in England. Unlimited power must, in most cases, at length go irrecoverably wrong, and may then strangle herself in her own ignorance and absurdities: such may be the fate of this, as well as of Papal and Mahomedan powers. And then it becomes of the last importance to have a sufficient number of wise men ready with the remedy, to act with coolness on a pre-concerted plan, and to establish a constitution that shall balance, support, and improve



prove itself. However, their ancient mode of government, its revolutions and decline, you are certainly right to investigate from their history ; and we may procure you the acquaintance of some who can shorten and direct your labour. I believe you will find their constitution, even at its best periods, to have been full of faults ; the legislature, or *Cortes*, generally inadequate to the framing of good laws, that should include the interests of all ranks ; these being mostly dictated by the crown or the nobles, amidst the perpetual contests, and without any certain balance, between those two powers ; the third and most essential power, the people, never having been well represented, united and constituted into an independent member of the legislature : their modes of proceeding were never, I believe, very good, nor sufficiently settled and regular. It seems to have been an accidental and unfinished system, with the kinds and degrees of liberty more productive of anarchy than of wisdom or steady exertion. However it might have been improved, if it had lasted, and had not, like most other

old Gothic governments, begun to decline and to vanish, before they knew well what it was, or might become. A constitution framed in rude and warlike times, impeded in the progressive changes necessary to make it keep pace with those of manners, opinions, and property, became gradually quite unfit to contend with the effects of luxury and partial interests; and tyranny, in new shapes, advanced faster than political knowledge and precaution, which often come too late.

You will find, that their wisest and greatest monarchs were those who protected the people, and depressed the nobles, the most; taking care to have always the lower and most numerous classes on their side: such were Alfonso III. Ferdinand I. Alfonso VI.; and particularly Alfonso VIII. and Ferdinand III.; and still more Ferdinand and Isabel, the great friends of the people, under whose joint reign the towns, through industry and wealth, were growing fast into weight and consequence in the state; so much that you know they formed a powerful opposition, and at last a war,

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against

against Charles V. who did not understand them or their constitution so well as Ferdinand. But the efforts of those monarchs seem to us only like temporary shifts, without system or foresight. They seem not to have known the importance nor the methods of establishing the third power in the state, as a permanent weight in the balance against the nobles, which was so much wanted by all those Spanish princes; a weight which you will see all wise princes steadily support, being a much better way of managing the aristocratic power, than the present general method of oppressing and taxing the people in order to pension the nobility, by which both classes are spoiled, and the nation is debilitated. Had Charles V. been wise enough to regulate and fix that third power in the legislature, instead of curbing, and thence gradually annihilating it, the government, and the country, might have gone on improving, and Spain would have remained still the first and most powerful nation in Europe.

As our modern system of industry and avarice advanced, money gradually ac-

quired more influence over mankind; and at length, I suppose, all power and authority will strictly follow property in whatever hands it may be found: and if a Drusus, or some other of the ancient independent spirits, were to revive, he would hardly find any road open to eminence, except that of the miser. However, while there is any sense of merit left in the world, virtues and talents will sometimes break into notice, and may command the rich. Here, in Castile, you will find the *ricos homes* began soon to have more than their share of influence in the Cortes; and afterwards, as nobles, they went on accumulating riches and power, which, in future contests, were seized by the crown through much blood and anarchy. Such has generally been, and must probably always be, the history of governments where the third power, or the people, are not supported. Might not this third power be so regulated and established, when well supported by the interest of the crown, as to supply the defects and fluctuations of property, and, in spite of poverty, maintain the necessary importance



importance and influence of the people? But then you may say, that such a system would require a perpetual succession of wise, scientific, and liberal monarchs; and for that purpose, a better kind of education would be necessary than it seems now the fashion to give to princes.

Our English plan of representation, which came in such good time to support a falling people, I am sorry to see, is not so generally known and understood as it deserves; and if we should neglect to complete the system, and to ensure its duration, it may, before it is perfected, suffer some unmerited discredit, which may prevent or retard its imitation or revival at some future period, for the benefit of mankind. How many things combine to retard the progress of the great science of government! Wise and liberal principles are very long in gaining a footing among men, and, on certain occasions, are all driven out again in a moment. From the time that Charles V. by force or influence in the Cortes, I believe here at St. Jago, got it established  
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to vote the supplies always before the redress of grievances—from that time the constitution was gone: the forms were preserved, as if only to give time to convince the public, by a kind of pretended specious experience, that those assemblies were unnecessary and burdensome: and by the decay of finance, their disuse became at last a matter of œconomy and necessity; as the maintaining a majority there was attended with more difficulty and expence, than a very considerable increase of the army, which was known to answer that and several other purposes more effectually; and thus came to be gradually established here, one of the most unlimited tyrannies in Europe. And we cannot wish for a better example to shew the effects of destroying and replacing an established free constitution by an arbitrary government, than the gradual decline of this country ever since that period. Hardly any of their writers dare yet look up to this first source of their decline: they seem complaisantly to shift the cause, and willing to place it on mismanagement. The boldest trace it  
to

to the end of Philip II.: but he only pursued the system, and employed and exhausted the broken constitution, left by his father. The result or accumulation of a succession of bad management during that and the following reigns, the natural consequence of unlimited power, seemed to fall with an accelerated weight upon that of Philip IV. and Charles II. They now persist in expecting a complete recovery from their Bourbon government, in spite of the experience of near a century, and after repeated disappointments, more than sufficient to shew them the fallacy of their hopes.

It would seem, that absolute governments cannot be improved by the addition of minute regulations and subdivisions, and are only embarrassed, instead of being tempered or directed, by an increase of legal forms and councils. Such governments may sometimes be administered by good men, as this seems to be at present, and then some little improvements may be made. But this nation seems too far sunk ever to  
be

be raised to any thing considerable by small and temporary regulations: it is plain these ministers can do little or no good: they cannot find tools to work with in the present state of things and condition of the people; the fallacious forms and institutions answer none of the purposes expected from them! Though they may pretend, or really aim at the public good, they cannot hit it; they soon perceive it impossible; then turn to follow their own interest, which unfortunately is not that of the nation; and the benefit of the people can, with them, only be a secondary consideration at best. Indeed, subdivisions of power seem to be adopted in this country only when useless or hurtful: each of the numerous departments of government is here a separate and independent despot, with authority enough to oppress and do mischief, but without either power or disposition to do good. With all our chain of controls, from parliament downwards, you know how difficult it is with us to get the public business properly executed; how little each man is disposed to do more than barely his duty, and

and how subject every department is to corrupt practices, and a domineering spirit. Human power, and self-interest, cannot prescribe bounds to themselves; these must be placed by force, necessity, and other hands. Government, or society, should be a system of checks, or of mutual control. We might as well, in mechanics, look for a self-motion that should begin, continue, and end, without a cause, as expect from human beings the duties of society without sufficient motives and control.

Though justice is tardy in this country, they were going to hang a poor man directly the other day, a servant of the king's, for amusing himself in writing letters about an imaginary conspiracy; and his being discovered to be foolish could hardly save him. There are many new regulations in the palace, and new edicts on this occasion. Many more are expected about the roads, the poor, on commerce, &c. This tyrannic and foolish government seems fonder of regulations than



than the freest and wisest we know : it is for ever regulating the people, as if it loved them : but it is soon perceptible, that to impoverish or divide, to terrify or weaken them, is the grand object of all those efforts of their wisdom and mystery. As it is in the nature of power to become more cautious and timid as it grows more despotic, and to dread and hate the people always more than they deserve, hence that perpetual desire which it shews for more and more laws and authority over them ; and which, by considering them as worse than they really are, by supposing them bad, seems purposely to make them so.

Now I think the contrary conduct has been found to succeed best with mankind : both individuals and bodies of men have been observed to improve, and become more worthy of confidence, by being trusted ; and they may be observed to have prospered in proportion to the liberty and security in which they have been left to live, and to manage their own affairs : and I believe nearly in this proportion we shall



shall actually find the powers, industry, the merits of all the people we know, from the last up to the first, from the miserable African or Siberian slave, up to the active and independent inhabitant of Great Britain. Believe men capable of great virtues or efforts, and they will commonly exert themselves to become so in reality. Many of the lowest Spaniards may yet be spurred on to exert great efforts of friendship and liberality, by trusting them, and shewing a confidence in the old reputation of their honour, though they may now be far inferior to their ancestors who gained them that reputation. A general Wolfe could persuade, and very soon believe, a set of common fellows, of which his regiment was composed, to be incapable of desertion, and they accordingly soon became so ; when he had sufficiently prepared them by his speeches and orders, guards and sentries, which had been placed in vain to prevent their escape, were called in, and the desertion ceased. There is a discipline which might be established through men's minds more readily than

than by the drill, but which few officers understand. An Alexander could stake his life against the probability of his physician's treachery. Such great spirits, capable of such confidence, must, of course, form others like themselves, and will generally be well served.

## L E T T E R XXIX.

*Spanish Manners. Taste. Passions. Happinesses. Female Character. Ministry. Princes.*

To Mr. A. J.

I HEARTILY wish to be drawing towards a conclusion with these scattered observations on this nation; and yet shall probably go on with what remains in the same desultory way I began.

The winter here, though not what you would call severe, yet sadly increases the silent melancholy gloom of poverty and indolence. Those who wish for a peaceful state of society, may find it now completely established in Spain. Without fire or chimney, though the snowy mountains are just in sight, people now wrap themselves up in their gloomy cloaks and apparent misery, and sit whole evenings

smoking their *figarros*, or praying over their beads in silent melancholy resignation, seemingly indifferent about every thing, till the sun shall call them again into life, and to the summer's evening dance.

I like your questions concerning national disposition, &c. but it requires reflection to answer them rightly. The high opinion I have of the Spanish character and behaviour (*trato*) may be rather new to you, and may differ from that of many, but it is not the less founded, and has been long the same. The contrast between the professions and the practice of friendship and hospitality, between real and affected honour and civility, is doubtless a very striking feature in modern manners, owing I believe chiefly to France; and the Spaniards, with all their honour and sincerity, are not entirely exempt from it. A semblance of virtue may be better than none: but the romantic purity of manners and principles, still assumed by some, and particularly those of high rank, though it may be better than nothing, yet becomes worse

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than

than ridiculous when we come to know more of their private history. The habits of politeness, by established custom, may properly enough supply the place of real goodness, civility, benevolence, and many other virtues; yet when carried too far, they may become deceit: how far, is hard to say. It is very difficult to estimate virtues and vices that depend so much on degree and fashion. In order to understand these things, you must know what they call the world; that is to say, the men and women of it: reading is insufficient; you must travel among, and live with, all ranks and nations.

It is likewise very difficult to judge rightly of the taste and predominant passions of men and nations, even after living much with them. If the people in this quiet nation can be said to love any thing with warmth or ardour, besides their dances and amusements, I think it may occasionally be, 1. Revenge. 2. Indolence. 3. Intrigue. Their hatred, which is probably stronger, seems most readily directed, 1. Against heresy, or rather heretics; 2.



Against the French; and 3. Against strangers, or all the rest of mankind. Civilization is properly enough measured by attention to strangers: here, as in other countries, in the sea-ports, and near the coast, they are more attentive, polite, and easier reconciled to foreigners, than more inland. They used to prefer the English to all other nations, but I fear that preference is now on the decline, and ready to change its object.

It is still more difficult to estimate the happiness of men or of societies. If the exercise of the human powers, our sciences and improvements, with all the increase of ideas and pleasures which attend them, do not bring us more good than evil, more pleasure than pain, we must appreciate happiness by the degrees of ignorance, inactivity, and insensibility, which will lead us to conclude, with the oppressed and enervated Asiatic, that non-existence is the best of all. But if, as I believe, this is not a true but a fallacious statement of the case; if our existence and our faculties are given us to be used, I know of no better

better measure of men's happiness than their activity, and the voluntary exertion of their powers and faculties. The more spirit and activity men shew in the discharge of their various duties, and the fewer they neglect, the happier they must be. We daily see that some object of pursuit is necessary to us, without which we can neither be active nor happy. It is needless to recal to your mind any of the numerous observations that will occur to prove this doctrine. In activity then of mind and body, more than in rest, must consist the happiness of human life; and more in the activity itself than in the attainment of those objects to which it leads. Upon this principle or scale I should place this nation among the least happy, especially in winter, and the English perhaps among the most happy.

Although we at present see here little else remaining but the skeleton, so to speak, of the old Spanish character, pride and patience, we must perhaps except the female part of society. The female character

is probably improved, while the male may have declined, throughout modern Europe. The sex improves by society, even though we keep them from knowledge; and they here now possess more domestic, social, and useful virtues, than formerly, when more secluded from the world. They were then subject to more indolence and timidity, to a slovenly indifference, and positive vices, and had only a few negative virtues at best. We find them endowed with all the attention and goodness, tenderness and humanity, so becoming their sex, and which they bestow on all around them, except heretics, of whom many of them shew the greatest dread and aversion, though sometimes mixed with compassion. Several of the Spanish ladies are still too much indulged in indolence, and somewhat spoiled by false delicacies and refinements; others, who have had sense and resolution to break through the restraints of fashionable idleness, have become manly and active, and can now ride, hunt, and labour in the garden, better than  
many

many of us: and some Aragonese gentlemen, I knew, have brought up their daughters in this way.

In spite of the flattery and self-conceit of the times, I believe the Bourbon period of Spanish history will make but a poor figure in their future annals. Almost every thing of importance that has been attempted by that government, has hitherto failed of success. At the Bourbon accession, the exhausted and depopulated state of the country, though great, was not however beyond the powers of liberal principles and good management to re-establish: and it is but too evident, that this jealous government, subject to no legal and effectual mode of influence or control from the people, has been either unable or unwilling to accomplish the restoration of a kingdom perhaps naturally the rival of France.

Their present ministry seems to be among the most sensible and efficient that they have had for some time past, except that of the Conde de Heranda, and perhaps that of Ensenada; but they, you

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know,

know, were not permitted to go on : and such will probably be the future history of Spain while a province of the Bourbon empire. Whenever they begin evidently to rise, some French trick or intrigue will always be at hand to slip away the ladder. Some of these ministers, being reputed men of business, give rise to sanguine hopes ; too sanguine, as usual here : for, supposing them really zealous and sincere in their endeavours and professions, what can they do with this yet exhausted and indolent nation, if they will not, or cannot restore them their constitution ; the only effectual means, I believe, of recovery. Several of what they think very important regulations in commerce and police are beginning to be adopted, and others expected, if not all interrupted by their taking a part in this foolish and unfortunate war. They are going to be as great fools as ourselves. Folly seems to be contagious at certain periods.

Their premier F. B. was bred to the law, and some time at Rome, from which it is thought he must know something ;



thing; but he has not power to do much. Others allege, that really great politicians would place him only among the little ones: that he relies too much on that left-handed wisdom, artifice and cunning: if so, he employs the best mask, a frank and open manner, *volto sciolto et pensieri stretti*, which he probably learned at Rome. Mr. G. may know South America, but it is doubted if he knows Europe, or the true principles of commerce, or of domestic police and prosperity: but these, though the present favourite topics here, we cannot expect to be well understood in the most anti-commercial nation, while they are not yet well understood in the most enlightened.

But it seems to be again the fashion of late, for princes to covet the reputation of being their own ministers, so that it would appear to be of less importance who is nominally so: and they seem likewise inclined to employ new men, probably from a natural dread and jealousy which absolute monarchy

monarchy must always have against aristocratic power. But neither of these systems can, I believe, answer the purposes intended. Our English ideas of the necessary responsibility of ministers are well founded, in the nature of men and of princes, and indeed are openly or tacitly acknowledged almost everywhere: it has manifestly appeared here lately in the case of *Squilacci*; and it seems to be tacitly understood even at Constantinople. The greatest ministers have always undertaken their office on those terms of responsibility, and have submitted to them with the best and the boldest grace. The people will generally consider ministers as answerable for public measures. Indeed, a certain degree of responsibility and publicity are highly necessary in many public measures, being the only checks that remain against various kinds of tyranny, which, on the other hand, is always struggling to get rid even of these, and of every other restraint. That of raising and employing new families in preference to the old and powerful, is the weak expedient of weak princes, and will generally

generally create them more enemies than friends. The third power, the people, or democratic part, well regulated and established (which a wise monarch can always manage and direct, so as to balance an ambitious aristocracy), will always be a much better expedient, and answer the above and every other purpose more completely.

Princes ought undoubtedly to be equal to the task of administration ; not that they may do the business themselves, but only see it properly done by others. A general, or head of any department, ought perhaps to be capable of serving in any inferior station in it ; but it is not necessary, nay it is highly improper, that he should do it. His duty is, to see that every man do his duty ; to inspect the whole, and know that every part of the machine is properly placed and employed, and the whole produces its effect : this would only be impeded by his attempting to supply, with his own hand, the work of any part. Great and comprehensive minds are known by their arrangements

rangements on the great and general scale, and not by what they themselves can execute in detail. On those principles, examine a Roman or a Prussian army, an English navy, a Grecian, Roman, or English government, and you will see their strength and success generally depend on each part performing only its own share of the work, and on its being properly and sufficiently employed; or if any parts do more than their duty, it is by the successive ascending of the parts below, and not by the descent of those above. In great plans, that require much time for completion, we must regret that successors so seldom carry on the ideas of their predecessors, and that nature seems to have planted a kind of enmity between them.

Doubtless, in the education of princes, it cannot be too much inculcated, that there is no certain way of creating or of employing merit in its proper place, without being thoroughly and practically a judge of it; nor of avoiding imposition,  
or

or of directing the various departments, without knowing the principles and the practice of each; nor without the great science or knowledge of men.

We cannot avoid speculating sometimes thus on subjects perhaps above our reach. We must often judge of our superiors, who require the control both of private and public opinion, as well as of others; and we all require some.



## L E T T E R   X X X .

*Situation.   Trade.   Prohibitions and high  
Duties.*

**I** OBEY your commands, and go on to observe and reflect, since we cannot yet get away. But you must not be surprised if this naked country should be found rather barren of useful matter, even for reflection; or if these letters should favour still more of their Spanish source, and turn to idle and indolent speculation. Doubtless, there are many singularities to be observed of this nation: I wish to give you only the most important. Their separate situation I consider as the source of many of those singularities; of their being less known, of their knowing less of the world, and of their being less influenced by its changes, than almost any other European nation. Hence manners, society, arts, trades, police, are more stationary,

tionary, and as it were left behind, and become more the objects of curiosity. The Spaniards are, however, obliged to conform at last to the system of which they are a part, and we perceive them to Philippise, *i. e.* to Frenchify, within the memory of man. They keep following, though at a distance, the errors as well as improvements of others. They have not yet gone through half the nonsense they are probably doomed to pass, and with their slow character they will be long about it. By opening their American trade with one hand, and shutting it up with the other by monopolies and prohibitions, they are now only imitating the pedlar and tyrannic systems of other nations. The people and territory at home surely deserve the first and always the greatest attention, and any colony or trade that does not tend to improve these, must be a burden, and without some other balance or support must at length bring down any nation, as it has done this. I fear most of our modern colonies have this tendency, chiefly owing to that grasping mono-

monopolising spirit, of confining their trade, &c. entirely to ourselves.

Colonial commerce has generally been over-rated: that of this country, which the nation has so greedily engrossed, and by which they are more than engrossed, to consider it only in a pecuniary view, will never probably amount to one-tenth of the value of the bread only that they eat; and cannot promote industry, as they will never sufficiently open their trade, nor allow the money to have any of its good effects, by circulating freely in and out of the country. Were they even to grant a bounty on its export, it might be better than attempting to hoard or dam it up within their dominions. But we have all been subject to the same errors. Is not there now some hope of our being cured of them? New events, new principles, and experience, must surely in time open our eyes. But I think nations seldom learn political wisdom of each other: folly seems far more contagious. Perhaps it must be so; as it is not the wisdom of age and experience

perience that lead the fashion, or that can always be heard amidst the passions of the young, and the interests of the rich and powerful.

Prohibition often superadds the evils of monopoly to its own; here are many; as in cottons, to exclude those of Manchester, against which there appears a peculiar enmity in this government, proportioned to the taste of the people in their favour. This prohibition is now meant to favour a company of monopolists in Catalonia, who pretend to manufacture enough, but cannot produce one-tenth of the national demand, and they therefore smuggle and sell at their own price. It would be endless to enumerate the evils of monopolies, prohibitions, and excessive duties. Other nations might see here many of their ruinous effects, and learn. We may see verified in practice, the doctrine of our friend A. Smith, *viz.* That high duties, 1. tempt to smuggle; 2. destroy men; 3. lessen revenue; 4. stop or diminish trade; 5. employ too many hands badly; 6. some

of whom oppress and tyrannise, and help to destroy the ideas of justice; 7. all of which curtail the supply of our wants, and the increase of industry. Perfection does not lie that way. It would be better to have no duties than have them too high. They may be considered, at best, as necessary evils, as may also the wars, national animosities, and commercial jealousies, from which many of them proceed; those wars have some good effects, though many bad. It would surely be better, on the whole, if society could exist without those evils: and if all duties were abolished, nations might then communicate freely, supply each other's wants and knowledge, and the world would improve much faster. Though this should be romantic and impracticable with our present habits, debts, and expensive governments, it may show us which way we should steer, and the nearer we can come to it the better. Hence, to lessen our duties, and raise our revenues internally, in the way of excise, as much as possible, like the Dutch, must be the next best. Begin by opening your  
ports ;



ports; store all your imports duty free, till wanted for consumption, or exportation; and avoid the inconveniencies, the great expence, and *faux frais* of drawbacks, officers, and other regulations: hence more trade with less capital. In this country, they load with duties, or prohibit any thing before they can furnish it themselves, and the people either smuggle, or learn to do without it, which prevents the growth of natural wants and industry, and maintains the national character of indolence and *baraganaria*.

## L E T T E R XXXI.

*Commerce. Policy. War. Gibraltar.*  
*Family Compact. Mediterranean.*

To Mr. C——.

COMMERCE and political œconomy are now the fashionable and fertile subjects of inquiry here, and every where: doubtless, they are better understood than formerly, and much ingenious speculation, and some uncontroverted principles, have been produced and admitted; yet national governments are necessarily tardy in adopting new systems. I think they are all apt to be too cautious, like this nation: hence the very slow progress of the human species in the art of government, and in all kinds of knowledge that concerns the public. The English should take the lead, and be the first to introduce a greater freedom of commercial intercourse between nations than

than at present. Our superior knowledge in these subjects entitles us to the place of leaders. But the wrangling spirit of opposition, though necessary in our legislature, is the cause of much delay, of a loss of time and opportunities. We can, however, make wars and treaties, and debate them afterwards; a fine field for ministerial wisdom and policy. But I fear our ministers do not always consult proper people, and, like other men, are too much confined to the accidental circle of their own acquaintance.

But I intended to say something more of Spanish politics. Spain ought certainly to remain neuter now, if ever: she can never probably get into such a favourable situation again, nor can she gain so much by the most successful war as she might now by trade. In the present state and employment of nations and their ships, the world will soon want carriers and neutral flags, and Trade would be glad of an asylum on the extensive coasts of this peninsula, if its inhabitants, or rather government, knew how to receive her. By

her means, if assisted with a little political wisdom, improvement might perhaps be carried a little farther into this naked country. Its coast being the pleasanter and most cultivated part, like a lace set round an old threadbare coat, might thus be made to extend its little improvements in the most natural way, *de proche en proche*; which might lead them to discover and remove some of the numerous impediments to the cultivation of their lands, the most natural source of arts and prosperity. At present, it is seldom attempted or thought of here, except sometimes by a nobleman, who, being banished from a dirty capital to a pleasant country, sets about improving his estate, *pour se desennuyer*. Or sometimes a rich Creol finds a little land to purchase, and by cultivating it, spreads plenty and industry around him, and shews his country the true foundation of national prosperity. But all is insufficient to open their eyes: they go on trying to build their fabric on colonial commerce, which might constitute a part, though not a necessary part, of the future structure,

structure, but can never serve as a good foundation.

Against the probability of Spanish hostility you reason rightly, and your conclusion would be just if your premises were true: I will go farther, and from a nearer view of the state of their country, allow that every consideration ought to deter them from entering now into a war, probably full of many pernicious consequences to them, by which they will give up many obvious advantages, and again stop every source and hope of improvement; without any material object in view, except the poor chance of taking Gibraltar by the tedious and expensive operations of a blockade. As to Gibraltar, it can be of very little service to them now, whatever it may be fifty years hence, in case of the improvement of their country, population, and commerce; the probability of which, however, you know I doubt. They might now draw more advantages from that garrison than if it was in their own possession: they want to bring colonies of inhabitants into



Spain, and here is already a rich one without any expence: much of the money of that place might be turned into Spain, through the proper industrious channels, which would help to improve the country to a great distance; this it has indeed already done to a considerable degree, in spite of their sullen, inveterate, and improvident measures. By supplying the garrison they would increase their own markets, and have the place more in their power. All their expence might be a little loss of revenue by smuggling, which however might be kept under, though never entirely suppressed, by themselves; or we could stop it when we pleased, whenever their court should behave with common politeness and good policy.

But it is in vain to expect such measures, or half so much wisdom, from such a government: you should recollect, that they do not reason as we do, and that few kingdoms are governed by the principles of their own interest, nor even by those of common sense: that happens only sometimes where the voice of an enlightened nation

nation can and will be heard, through their representatives, in a well-constituted legislature. The passions, manners, prejudices, of a court, of a confessor, or a mistress, often determine the most important political measures. I hope you likewise perceive, what is obvious to all the world beside, that the Bourbon interest and influence will always ultimately prevail here, whatever tedious and pretended deliberations, or other masks, may be employed. You are also to take into account the honest and obstinate adherence of his present Catholic Majesty to all his treaties, principles, and engagements; and the inveteracy of this court against England, now even greater than that of France. From these premises you may draw juster conclusions concerning their future measures. In short, this kingdom must probably long be as effectually governed by France as one of her own provinces. The D. de Choiseul only concluded, by the family compact, what the course of events, like a second nature, had long been preparing. The family

family interest, the local situation, all cement the connection. When Spain was reduced to a third of the population of France, and her force and industry to a still less proportion, it became a natural and easy matter for the superior to rule. Nor is there now any probability of such causes or events as formerly produced an Alberoni or a Riperda; nor could such men find means to counteract the present course of affairs. Spain must be governed by France till brought nearer to an equality with that kingdom. Our first great object would be to raise her to that equality: if she resists, or cannot be raised, our next best is to consider her as our natural enemy. Most of these should be set down as fixed principles, some of which we may endeavour to temper and mitigate; others can only be overcome by force. Even the termination of the present reign cannot change the nature of things. France has not watched and directed the affairs of this kingdom during near a century, and brought them to their present dependent state, to let the event depend on the life or opinions of any one,

or

or of a few persons, or any little intrigue of an old worn-out party. All the old stock of secret enmity against the Bourbon power is now crushed or worn out. Government, in extirpating the roots of the late party against *Squillacci*, took occasion to cut up those of the old opposition. But we may fancy we see forming, at a distance, a more respectable party than any of these, a party built upon reason, science, on the natural love of liberty and their old constitution. The same sentiments and events may perhaps revive in Europe with science and civilization, as formerly in Greece, *viz.* those of political liberty, attended with the limitation or banishment of all their tyrants; and we should hope now with less risk of running into the opposite extremes of republicanism. Limiting their princes would be better than banishing them.

Some have imagined, that as our possessing Gibraltar has hurt the pride of Spain, this is the cause and the only subject of difference, and that its cession would restore our friendship, and buy  
Spain



Spain off from the family compact: nothing like it; *n'en croyez rien*: the restitution of fifty Gibraltars could not now change the essentials of their situation, nor make them your friends, if France does not chuse it. It is one of the effects, but not the cause of our difference: and they must know little of the world who suppose that we should have more influence over Spain without Gibraltar in hand than with it. Besides, I believe, we are seconded by most nations in this measure: many of them wish Gibraltar to be in our hands, rather than in those of Spain, who, they well know, would tyrannize and destroy, but never encourage a free trade through these straits, whenever Spain possesses Gibraltar. You remember how Monf. le D. de C. in 1766 and 1767, prematurely blabbed the secret, like a little trifling Frenchman, if it had not been already known, repeatedly calling those straits his *master's seas*, in his correspondence with the governor of Gibraltar. And now that the alarm and jealousy of our power must gradually subside, even in spite of French artifice to keep it up, we



become still more fit to be possessors of that port and garrison for the convenience of the world in general. Many of the Spaniards themselves are pleased at our possessing it, on account of the trade and the hopes it affords to a great distance. As to the importance of that place, it will not probably be well known till after it is lost, or given up in some foolish negotiation. That importance will be difficult to estimate in England, and may produce some knotty questions whenever discussed. In order to judge, we must know those countries well that surround the Mediterranean. If you do not know them yourself, listen diligently to those who do know them, and the trade they may produce. It is Gibraltar that now gives you most of your superior consequence and influence in those countries: without that place, your Mediterranean passes, and maritime importance there, would soon sink to a level with those of any other distant nation: your national pride, as well as interest, must not admit of being yet reduced near to that level. Besides, that place must be kept for reasons of  
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of state, and of national honour and glory, which ministers well know cannot be estimated in pounds, shillings, and pence.

From the times of ancient Greece and Rome, and perhaps long before, we know the Mediterranean has been a most important commercial sea; nature has made it of the first consequence on this globe: sixty or a hundred millions of people that surround and communicate with it, render its commerce and navigation of the greatest consequence to a maritime or commercial nation, and especially to us, situated as we are. Now that our capitals may soon be more at liberty, and not so much engrossed by colony commerce, which is never equally beneficial with that of competition, let us hope that some capital may be spared to the reviving of trade near home, where it is of most importance, and particularly in those seas where all the surrounding nations rejoice to see the English flag, and are sensible of their danger of being tyrannised over, in their trade and communication, by the Bourbon powers, if we were once excluded. The Turks, Italians, all rejoice to see  
you.

you. Your Turkey company, because they do little, must do more harm than good: abolish all such commercial barbarisms. This is not a trade that requires a company. I believe there are very few branches of commerce that require any such monopolizing and pernicious combinations, except those that deal with wild and savage countries, where the necessary stock and expensive establishments fall entirely upon one of the parties, on the civilized, and may fall so heavy as to require a joint stock company.

## L E T T E R XXXII.

*Spanish Charity and Poor. Spirit of Power,  
of Control, and of Government.*

SINCE we cannot yet leave Spain, I shall go on with a few more observations and reflections. The great number of poor, and of charitable prelates and convents, which are generally found together, being among the striking features of this state of society, as formerly with us, we have opportunities of seeing all the good and evil of these old institutions. I do not think their charity deserves the name of virtue, either from its motives or effects; the love of God, or fear of the devil, and not the benefit of the people, or of the public, being their motive and object; and in the way it is managed, becomes certainly a political evil, and one of the worst parts of their very bad police. Their clergy are the most improper to have charge  
of

of the poor: they cannot employ them; they only maintain them in idleness, and promote the trade of begging, which is become almost creditable in Spain and Portugal, and often very insolent. The remedy is doubtless difficult, like that of every established abuse: if those charities were to cease, numbers would be distressed; half their poor would starve: if in some other country, the other half might find means to work and live, but it is doubtful if they could here do either: their increase is an evil so glaring and distressing as to call loudly for redress even in this nation, where all redress is so often reduced to patience. The state is repeatedly looked up to for relief, but in vain; though the state is not so wisely constituted as to care, or be much interested in such matters, nor in the event of their own or of any other measures, yet it is too jealous of power to give up the business to provincial or other management fitter for the task, as often proposed: they always pretend to be preparing some effectual regulations. Such is the nature of these governments;



half the nation might beg or starve before they would relinquish the smallest article of apparent power, Their *hospicios*, and schools of industry, are already on the decline before they are well begun. Government cannot execute the detail of such business: it can only at best prevent evil, but can seldom do positive good: it may punish, but can seldom reward, with justice or effect.

We have more instances here of that jealous spirit of power, of its increasing as the causes for it diminish, and gradually, as it overcomes all opposition, of its becoming more timid and cautious. We see it in the detention of the nobility at court without necessity, and evidently against the interest of the country; in the division of offices and classes of people, in fomenting a certain deleterious spirit of jealous distinction, in the true tyrannic or Moorish style; in the assumption of the municipal government, and management of every fund in every township, by which their towns are become nasty ruinous places, without police, or any possibility of it.

it. These measures, together with the example of most men in public employ, are more than sufficient to banish all public spirit and motives of union, while those of discord reign with effect. The church, the military and naval departments, those of finance and law, strangers, towns and districts, trades and professions, have each their distinct class and system of laws and regulations, their different judges, courts, and methods of proceeding and appeal. These bodies thence become inveterate enemies and watchful spies on each other, and exhibit society as if its component parts were intended to injure and impede instead of assisting one another: the professed intention of order and regularity is constantly defeated, and the more probable one of disunion and contention promoted.

It might be amusing to trace how this feeble and timid policy has grown up among our modern governments. In the research we should probably be carried as high as the dissolution or decline of the Roman empire. From the time that Con-

stantine chose to regulate away all the remains of the ancient simplicity of Roman police, which favoured the union of different talents in the same person, and united the different parts of society to the whole and to one another; and when Theodosius completed the system, and introduced the inquisitorial spirit of orthodoxy and persecution; the motives and principles of enmity were then increased, and whole classes of people became incorporated bodies of jealous enemies, inspired with secret mutual animosity.

If a being whose reason could always direct his passions and govern his actions, were to come among men to set them right, of all the human passions he would be most astonished and baffled with that of the universal love of power, ever blindly bent, in spite of all experience, on devouring all within its reach, and at last even itself, together with those it might mean to save: though often assumed at first with the most benevolent intentions towards mankind, its very kindness only tends at last to squeeze  
them

them to death. Societies, or bodies of men, are equally subject to this passion. We all require some control, and he that pretends to require none, is certainly not the most to be trusted.

To bridle or regulate this passion has always been one of the chief objects of civil government, and the most difficult task with the wisest lawgivers. Our own limited monarchy, professing to adopt a complete system of mutual checks to control every abuse of power and art of imposition, has appeared sometimes to bid the fairest for success. We might approach still nearer to perfection, if we could complete our professed system, and form a legislature that should entirely include and balance the different interests of every class, and perfect the component parts already so wisely separated and disposed into legislative, executive, and judicial powers; if we could arrange and simplify as we go on; systematize and abbreviate our huge and increasing code, instead of annually heaping such multitudes of needless and contradictory



tory laws on each other. You see in our own history, how often all the complicated systems of precaution against this passion for power have been defeated and worn out. From such repeated experience we might expect to be politically wiser than we appear to be. Our last revolution is, of course, the most interesting to us, but all its tendency and effects seem not yet to be well understood and investigated. As it was rather hurried and incomplete, we might hope to see it gradually improved, and that we should not be so overcautious in admitting of real improvements. I know many of you think human nature and human government are not capable of much higher perfection. To limit human hopes and ideas of perfection, would not produce stability, but a retrogradation. We were born for action, and must ever be going either backward or forward. Better always be aiming at perfection, at the risk of going wrong sometimes, than stand still. A state of perpetual tranquillity was not made for man, and may be as dangerous as the contrary extreme, and



more hurtful to the human character. Every system of civil government, formed for the purposes of equal justice and sufficient liberty, must be more complicated and troublesome than simple despotism; and the constant trouble and attention it requires, must be part of the price to be paid for it: and might not some of the trouble be bestowed on simplifying and abridging the laws? It were to be wished you had more gentlemen lawyers in your House, to help to keep those of the profession to order, and attentive to the most necessary objects of legislation, though their business, and their numbers, might be thereby diminished.

I can grant you, that we may sometimes be at a loss to determine between the advantages of leaving mankind free to find their own political happiness with the risk of going wrong, and that of forcing them to their own good. In the one way, we see them become languid, weak, and indolent, in proportion as they are guided by force, though for their own benefit:

and in the other, though all their powers increase by exercise, various impediments to the use of these powers seem to increase with them. The one mode as it were deprives us of our natural strength, and the other impedes the use of it when acquired. The ill-united Provinces began to form a government, at the time they revolted from Spain, and have not yet been able to get half through the business. The American colonies may be at least as long in accomplishing the same, unless they submit a little, and with more temper, to be assisted in it, by us their old friends. How many improvements are yet wanting in our own government, because impeded by the tormenting, though necessary vigilance of parties, mischievously watching and opposing each other? But as in religion, it may be said, that those evils proceed from the abuse of liberty, and not from the right use of it; and may not be adherent to liberty itself, but to the want of some arrangement necessary to complete the system; if the good and evil of these two modes of government should appear nearly equal,

equal, the activity and exertion required, and hence acquired in that of the most freedom, would turn the scale in its favour. But though men are easier led than driven, most of them may require a little of both ; and as nothing is perfect, we must be contented with as great a portion of the good as we can. To govern mankind, there must be a sufficiency of power placed somewhere, even at the risk of its possessors turning some of it to their own advantage, and paying themselves for their trouble : and perhaps we can only check and curtail, but cannot entirely obviate all such abuses, by the proper choice and control of those in power ; though, for that purpose, it is perhaps better that we, the governed, retain the control than the choice of those executive men. This speculative kind of politics seems productive of endless strings of reflections. Indebted to yours for their production, I more freely venture to transmit them, as they belong to subjects of your present and future enquiry, as a traveller and a senator, and they may furnish matter and motives to  
think,

think, as effectually as more regular and elaborate disquisitions: they at least serve to amuse, *pendant que le monde ira son train*. But as I cannot give you all the reflections that occur, the choice is still difficult.

I am glad to find we so nearly agree in our ideas of education as well as politics. There remains yet much to be done by abridging and shortening the way to knowledge, by which the same efforts would certainly carry us much quicker and farther on our journey thither. On this principle it is that algebra has so greatly accelerated the progress of the mathematical sciences, by bringing many objects and ideas into one view, and thence facilitating the comparison, the reasonings, and conclusions. Though we cannot put the Iliad into a nutshell, yet in many subjects, by retaining only the essentials, and bringing those nearer together, the consequent reduction of the immense number of volumes and objects of research that now oppress the inquisitive mind with despair, would be of vast service to the world.

I am,



I am, perhaps, more satisfied than pleased to find, that you become sensible of the difficulties of reforming the world, which is a symptom of a mind improving into manhood: for most young men are warm and zealous for total reformatations, and are apt to go too fast and too far; while the aged are too cautious, and aware of the danger of every innovation: so that youth and age should be classed in a way to assist and correct each other; the one for counsel, and the other for action; and in the choice of men for different purposes, their years, as well as character, must be considered. How to alter and improve, by any human wisdom, the character of a whole people or nation, is yet a secret, as you observe; and can only be done by time and events, which gradually change the temper of the mind, almost independent of human endeavours. Sudden changes are seldom desirable. It is gradation that makes them both pleasant and possible. Perhaps improvements are more useful and acceptable, for passing through a certain progression of steps and errors,  
analogous



analogous to the common march of the human mind.

Hardly any of our actual constitutions of government can be ascribed to human plan or intention: accidental circumstances, habits, and opinions, change and establish all these things for us with a slow and imperceptible pace. It is no wonder that we should so seldom foresee enough to establish successful systems for futurity, for all our sagacity is often insufficient to decide concerning the causes of such events and changes as pass under our eye. The wisest men have often the majority against them, till it is too late to attend to their advice. Yet with all our moral *vis inertiae*, or tendency to political stability, the revolutions in opinions and manners among us Europeans, are so quick and progressive, that our hasty and half-formed laws and constitutions are presently left behind and out of date, or must conform to those manners and opinions they were established to direct, and must follow at a distance, instead of taking the lead in regulating our actions. Let us not however despair by the way,  
and

and give up the pursuit of knowledge and rational speculation, because at present disregarded, or found insufficient for all the purposes for which they were intended or acquired. Some uses will always be found for them in the worst of times, and human sagacity, science, and virtue, will ever be respected, and will bring self-satisfaction, though otherwise reduced to be their own reward. Nor let us expect too much from human nature or society: as it advances one way, it must lose ground another: as men improve in knowledge and refinement, patriotism and public virtue must diminish: as arts and wants increase, time and labour become of greater value, till at length there is little or none to spare for the public, which therefore cannot then be served on disinterested principles, as none can afford to work for nothing: every thing must then be bartered or sold; our time, labour, our vote or interest, must be made to turn to account. Perhaps we cannot procure arts, commerce, and improvement, on any other terms.

## L E T T E R XXXIII.

*Of Changes. Towns. Police. Of Princes.*

To Mr. C.

**I**N this country we have the advantage of a kind of living history, and may see the true spirit and tendency of the old European systems of policy and religion, from which but few nations are yet sufficiently liberated, though some good beginnings have been made. You know how seldom collective bodies of men can be brought to act on rational principles, and that they are generally governed by previous habit and custom; so that it is difficult to conceive how certain reforms have been brought about. Those legislators who have appeared to succeed the best in changing or improving the manners and principles of their nations, may have been more indebted to fortune than foresight for their success,

success, and may have been led instead of being leaders in the crowd that was already running towards reformation. The lower the state of society, or condition of men, the more impracticable it becomes to raise or better that condition, and it can only be done by partial and gradual means. Here, government is ever attempting magnificent and impracticable improvements, instead of following and assisting the feasible efforts of the people. If they were only to endeavour gradually to bring the tenures of this province (Galicia) *los foros*, into general use throughout Spain, it might do much towards peopling and improving the country.

This nation has formerly been as much tormented with internal and civil wars as any other. The people were then obliged to resort to certain situations, and live together in towns, and are still retained there by habit and indolence, or want of sufficient inducement to change; so that there is too large a proportion of the few people now in this peninsula, contained in a small number of cities, which are separated by  
extensive

extensive deserts, with a very scanty proportion of villages: and most of those, except Cadiz and Barcelona, are now in a poor and ruinous state, and must probably decline still lower. To restore them would require more than the country can yet for a long time afford; such as better artists, commerce, funds, freedom, and a different race of people, who should know how to live in them. We are astonished to see those who have habitations in the country forsaking them to live in these dirty towns: we believe it is generally owing to the taste and influence of the women in each family. I know only of one gentleman in this province, who has taste and resolution to live almost entirely on his estate in the country; but he suffers his wife to live in town. To improve a nation, we ought perhaps to begin with the women: they could always lead us the right way, and we know they can be taught to chuse it. Though they generally love a town life, *es una borachera*: by small indulgence at first, we come at last to drunkenness: yet I know many who, from better habits,



habits, occupation, and finer taste, have soon learned to prefer a country residence : do not imagine that the oppression of the towns, by the national government seizing their funds, is any stroke of political wisdom to drive the people to the country : those measures are nothing more than the blind rapacity of despotism, cutting down the tree to get at the fruit. Nor would it now be easy to drive the people from the towns, where the few arts, trades, and necessities of life are only to be found, while none have the spirit to encourage and produce them in the country. Every part of public police, even the manner of building, or of cleaning the streets, is doubtless of consequence ; yet it is not necessary to take it out of the hands of the people, on pretence of doing it for them, the usual method with arbitrary governments ; but it would be right to put them in a condition to do it for themselves. Government either does nothing, or when it meddles, does too much. How often might the merchant, the farmer, the parent, or tutor,

say to such governments, ' We only want  
' to be let alone.'

I am pleased to find, that we at last agree as to the impossibility of reforming mankind by the methods usually proposed ; and that the only influence now remaining in the world sufficient to restore it, is that of its monarchs: and that by educating and forming them into what they ought to be, is the only chance you have of reforming your constitutions, the state, and the people. But if we consider well the difficulties attending reform, the numerous previous circumstances to be prepared by time, science, foresight, and fortune, we shall judge more charitably of those princes who have failed, or have declined the task, and may see why there have been so few Lycurguses or Alfreds.

Some wise man has observed, that if integrity could be generally preferred, the age would mend of itself. But it is to be feared, the difficulties in that way too have increased. While you give power and influence

fluence only to property, which is the sole merit you admit of being represented in your house, and that but inadequately, integrity and all other merits are out of the question, and can hardly be sufficiently attended to. You can thence only expect a government of the richest party; and the most expensive possible; such as get into power by their superior wealth. We cannot expect the richest to be the most economical members; and if, in granting the revenue, any means can be found secretly to reimburse them their share of the taxes, they will probably be as little scrupulous about increasing them, as those who have nothing to tax. Thence you may see how difficult it is to form a legislature where a majority may not combine to fleece the nation and divide the spoils. You possess, perhaps, the best securities against it of any nation, and you should therefore be watchful to preserve and increase those securities. Were it not for the frequent transgression of your laws, by which real merit and abilities often steal in among you, we should lose the services of many

worthy members, and might have a legislature very inferior and inadequate to its duty.

Something more than mere integrity may be necessary to reform or improve this perverse wicked world. However, we know that integrity joined to science, in a liberal and amiable character, can do much; and when placed at the head of any department, those qualities become contagious, and that department is infallibly advanced or reformed. We have just seen a *General Conway* at the head of the ordnance, where, on taking his seat, all the classes of that extensive department were observed to exert themselves far beyond the narrow limits of mere duty or obligation, and every branch was seen to improve as if by enchantment; and could he have remained, we should soon have seen the whole wear a new face; we should have procured what we want, in order to bring us on a footing with other military nations; such as a proper *école pratique et theorique*, and a proper union of the two.

Scientific

Scientific military inspectors for most of the practical business; a proper connection and acquaintance between the many different branches, which would remedy much ignorance and some dishonesty. Many other regulations and improvements would gradually have arisen from that source, and from the joint endeavours of all; for such a head can command both the affections and abilities of all the members, whereas one of mere integrity might not be able to do either. Indeed, to do every thing effectually, and make the nation as military as it ought to be, the army, ordnance, and militia, should all be under the same head, which ought doubtless to be a good one. It has been done, and we may hope to see it again. But as I do not pretend to teach government, I only give you hints of what is possible.

On these principles I can agree with you, that a prince of a certain great, good, and liberal character, with science and assiduity, would be the only power in the world that could now possibly reform



it: the reformation you want, may be less than that required by other nations, and may nevertheless be essential; but nothing, I believe, can procure it you, but such a prince; and even he must be favoured by times and circumstances. To produce those together then should be our great aim, if human sagacity and endeavours could do any thing towards it. I do not like your ideas always the less for being romantic and improbable: who knows how much our small efforts may contribute to such desirable ends?

I approve much of travel, as well as study, being part of your plan. The lessons to be learned here would be few, but important—To see and consider well a nation long on the decline, with the various difficulties that would attend the reforming a corrupt and weakened government and people, the superior and intermediate ranks of which are found to be thoroughly depraved, and rather chusing to submit to be oppressed themselves than relinquish the pleasure of oppressing others,  
and

and where the people prefer indolence and dependence, to liberty with industry. The possibility of reforming such a nation might be doubtful, and perhaps not within the power of the greatest human perseverance, or the longest life : but the attempt would still be noble, would ensure applause, and a name for ever, and might in time succeed. Let a great prince, like Philip of Macedon, take care of the education of his successor, and in a few generations much might be done : to see here the materials, and contemplate on the means of reformation, would contribute to enlighten, to inspire, and invigorate the mind.

Great souls surmount great difficulties which were before considered as invincible, and they easily form others like themselves: the laborious and middling ranks of men are seldom, as you suppose, so far spoiled and enervated as to be incapable of great, and even of virtuous exertions, when the proper motives are discovered and applied. On the broad basis of the real interests of a whole people, may always be erected a constitu-

tion which would gradually strengthen and improve both itself and them. To discover that interest, and that constitution, would not be the greatest difficulty, when once cleared of the speculative refinements of law and learning; the application to practice, and mode of proceeding, would be the hardest task. In every nation you may find materials to fill up your plan; keeping the one great object chiefly in view, to which all others would be relative and subservient, and claim only their due proportion of time and attention. By mixing study, residence, and travel, in proper quantities, I think, Mr. Mentor, you could not fail of some degree of success with your Telemachus. There can at least be no harm in pleasing ourselves with the idea.

I am glad to see in your plan, that home is not to be neglected, but made the first object. That is the foundation of the whole ideal fabric. In our present state, and former history, you will find ample materials for your purpose. From the time our an-  
cestors

cestors left the forests in Germany, we have had many excellent parts or pieces of a constitution. These, properly arranged, might form a valuable collection of experimental and political wisdom; from which might be formed an edifice that might be gradually completed by the wisdom and experience of past and of future times. Our domestic politics, and history of the present day, I consider likewise of importance, with whatever contempt such studies may be treated by some. Though manners and principles may seem every where on the decline, you may comfort yourselves with not being near so far gone in that road as your neighbours. A good head would probably still find members sufficient for his purpose, and would create more. Nay, I think there is yet in those islands, more sense and science, more virtue and personal merits, than in many of the nations taken together.

If



If the idea of a constitution (for we have often had but little else, and have plumed ourselves upon it), if that has been the cause of so much exertion and activity, and the source of our prosperity, what might not be expected from a real one? Its outlines are sufficiently known, and indeed already drawn and fixed; though in some parts a little defaced, and in others turned from the original direction. But if only a majority of you were in earnest, it might all be restored and improved, without much debate or difficulty.

Nor is there much reason to dread that any of your princes will prevent the real improvement of your constitution (though it is highly prudent to be watchful of every possible case); and still less can I conceive, with some, the possibility of any regular plan of reducing the nation, by gradually corrupting, impoverishing, and dividing it; as that would be, in the end, a loss not only of time, but of every thing valuable to themselves, their family, friends, and people; and every real interest they can

20

have,



have, is so much better secured by the contrary conduct. Besides, the improbability of succeeding in any such plan against an informed and spirited nation must long be a sufficient security. Their old laws, forms and habits, situation, accidents, their very caprices, would all operate against it, and might defeat it, in any stage of its progress, or even after its completion; for you know the spirit of liberty and resistance has always revived among us islanders, even after periods of the meanest and completest subjection. In a plan of improvement and reform, a prince might likewise meet with great troubles and opposition, with powerful parties interested in established abuses, perhaps as much as in the other; but it is to be hoped they would be more easily overcome, and some of them might be gained. They that have power enough to do harm, can certainly do good with it, which is always easier. Probity and virtue are ever respected in the worst of times.

The

The question then might be, to determine, Which is the most eligible plan, which is the noblest task? It is not exactly the choice of Hercules; for here are toils and troubles both ways; but all the pleasure is on the side of virtue. He would hardly hesitate, but must prefer the task of making himself and his nation free, happy, and great, to that of making them miserable and contemptible slaves, and himself unhappy and insecure. In some serious matters, he might reform gradually, and in others at once, by great and decisive strokes; without suddenly forcing new systems before they were sufficiently wanted and wished for, on the one hand; or creating and feeding of anarchy by the tedious and pernicious contentions of jarring interests on the other.

I think you would succeed in impressing our young T. with our doctrine; the greatest difficulty would arise afterwards, particularly that of a sufficient perseverance, which I fear is not natural to high birth;

birth ; to persist practically in all that should be previously determined, in spite of the numerous surrounding temptations and opinions, so well calculated to lead him into other paths. Yet after all that has been alleged of the natural disadvantages of situation, and of the education of princes ; of the difficulties or impossibility of making them feel and toil like other men ; might we not look for motives sufficient for the exertions we want, and even of a more powerful nature, from other sources suited to their station—from honour, glory, sentiment ? May we not form a laborious, as well as a liberal mind of royal, as well as of plebeian extraction ? Though affliction and necessity are the best schools, is there no other ? or is the palace more exempt from these than the cottage ? or is there always some uncommon degree of indolence, indulgence, some unfeeling kind of indifference, or else ungovernable passion, incident to high birth, and which must be conquered, before they can be on a footing with other men, and made equally fit for application ? Can they never arrive at  
that

that perseverance, and those habits, or powers of labour, capable of persisting throughout the completion of a great and tedious enterprize, and to the end of a long life? Their treatment from the cradle is generally but too well calculated to make tyrants of them, habitually and imperceptibly, without their knowing it; yet there have been many instances of all those disadvantages being overcome, and many princes have laboured and persevered in great and good actions like the greatest of other men.

I can conceive a generous and benevolent young mind, though born in a palace, to be fired with emulation at some of those great features of truth, virtue, and public good; shaking off the yoke of a court, and breaking from the trifling circle of people of fashion, who (perhaps without intending it) confine his views, intercept all real and great information, and fill up his time with trivial formalities, indolent pleasures, and pernicious amusements. When once at liberty, and with the dispositions  
that



that I suppose, you would find means to bring him acquainted with every class of people, with every part of his future dominions, with every art or subject of importance, and almost with every person whose character and opinions were worth knowing, and which he would learn to estimate, as he became practically acquainted with mankind. He would then distinguish, prepare, and create real merit, for a future day ; would learn to estimate the relative importance of objects, of men and things ; to distinguish real knowledge from specious pretences to it, wisdom from cunning, the nature, force, and uses of different human characters. He would see the manufactures, the produce, and nature of the different counties, &c. &c. After all this, accompanied with the study of whatever may be of real use and importance, by a due division of time, I will suppose he would execute our plan of foreign travel, which I should leave you to prepare and delineate before you set out.

To a warm pursuit of wisdom and useful knowledge, if he should fortunately  
join



join a taste for the beautiful, which is highly probable, as these are connected in great minds, what sources of pleasure lie open to him in the sublime and beautiful of nature; in the remains of Greece and Rome, from the best ages of Italy! And thence, what delightful romantic ideas and plans of what may be done, by the junction of arts and wise policy! I would depend on you to preserve him from being too much taken up with any one branch or favourite pursuit; though I should perhaps permit him a few lessons, and to handle the tools in every art or trade of consequence to men, with the greatest of its professors, whom you will generally find to be the most simple and intelligible. Almost every thing is simple, when divested of its quackery. What a noble object to contemplate, and to transmit to history—a nation, its constitution, its virtues, character, importance, restored by the prince. If Cæsar and Alexander had been as wise as they were great, and had imitated Solon and Lycurgus, how much better for the world!

and

and how different it might have been now! One might run on to harangue and declaim to any length on such a favourite subject: but you know I always wish to keep down the warmth and verbosity of declamation.

In your travels, you should begin with the north of Europe, where the manners and virtues, the spirit of war, the habits of industry and application, are to be found, and of a kind better suited, and more necessary to us, than those of the South.

## L E T T E R XXXIV.

*Rural Taste and Improvements. Servants.  
Population. Money, &c. Impediments  
to the Rise of Spain.*

To Mr. F.

SOME more scattered observations I shall collect from loose notes, and you must excuse the deficiencies of order and connection. The want of taste for a country life, and for the beauties of rural scenes, I consider as a radical defect in this nation as well as in France, and which has important consequences both on the ornamental and useful arts : but it is generally the case with a depressed and impoverished people ; as they must be at their ease before they can think of pleasurable scenes, or labour long to produce them. Their blind government bids them work, and does not see that their hands are tied.

As

As to the produce and state of agriculture, I have little else to add to what has been already scattered in the letters to friends C. P. J. &c. Of the natural history, the numerous and trifling particulars I do not pretend to give you. If we could learn to be contented with essentials, the time, the pains required to collect and arrange them, would be more frequently bestowed, and they might then be of more use than the voluminous compilations lately in fashion, which will generally be confined to the libraries of idle curiosity and ostentation. Suffice it to know, that Spain will produce every thing that grows in other countries under the same climate. Saffron, silk, sugar, have been well cultivated in the southern parts. Potatoes were first brought to Galicia from South America, and thence spread over Europe; but they are now generally disliked in Spain, even by gallegos; they call them toads meat.

The silk business was well understood and practised by the Moors; and though

it fled with them, its revival has been since attempted, with various, but small success, at Granada and Valencia. This government knows not how to encourage it, nor let it alone. Prohibiting the export as a raw material, is certainly not the best way to promote the produce, and taxing the trees is still worse. Under such ill-judged and variable regulations, it is surprising that any part of this business should yet be found in Spain.

Among other pleasant parts of their ancient and national manners, we find the old fashioned attachment and familiarity between masters and servants, which we see in old plays. The great houses are full of old domestics, which are considered as belonging to the family for life. Though they are too numerous, and too idle, and may be more indebted to the vanity than to the charity of the master for their support; yet if he were to live more in the country on his estate, he might easily provide for them, to the benefit of all parties. They often join a little in the conversation while



while waiting at table, but always with great propriety; and the affability, kindness, familiarity, and politeness, with which they are treated by their masters, is very pleasing, and produces warm and lasting attachments, and other good effects on manners and morals. The great distance and superiority we generally assume with our servants, are surely beyond the proper medium, considering our laws and manners, and breeds animosity between the different ranks in society. Overweening pride and delicacy know no bounds, till checked by the good example of some sensible people of rank and fashion, to whose more natural affability and humanity we must look up for the remedy to this evil among the middling ranks, with whom this species of foolish pride is more common. Perhaps there must be more distant behaviour, and jealousy of superiority, in those countries where there is an animating circulation of rank and fortune, and where some are always treading on the heels of the rank next above them.

A gentleman of this province, lately from England, and who had been there before, says, that he does not find the English nation so much improved as he expected. The upper ranks, he thinks, more retired, proud, selfish, and unsocial, than formerly; forsaking their old hospitable and popular manners; though perhaps more refined, and extracting, as it were, the essence of every thing, to enjoy it among themselves. The lower ranks, he finds, more ragged, drunken, debauched, at least in the great towns, and not so cleanly as twelve and twenty years ago; but believes, that some of the middling ranks, and the manufacturing counties, are improved. Let us hope that part of the difference may proceed from the change that twenty years may have produced in his mind. However, the observations of no travellers deserve more attention than those of learned Spaniards, such as he; and a few of his remarks are worth all the volumes that the French have written about us, except Voltaire. I wish the Spaniards in general were not quite so fore, and so easily

easily hurt with the observations of foreigners upon their country. These from the candid and impartial may often prove beneficial. Though we may be sometimes prejudiced and unjust, we cannot always be so.

As to their population, exports, and other elements of political arithmetic which you want; I can add but few facts to the general ideas already mentioned, nor can I point out any certain method of obtaining them, in a country where those matters are yet but little understood or considered. Campomanes can probably give you the most, and they may afterwards be somewhat corrected at their different ports among the foreign merchants. I suspect not only history, but the accounts of the living; and that each country is inclined to magnify its own population, produce, &c. Those of this nation are obviously very scanty, especially in the central parts. The country was probably at former periods more populous. We read of 130,000

horse at once in the field, during some of their wars, in which all the different nations of the peninsula were engaged ; but we must always suspect the truth of numbers given in history, and not least in theirs. However, several species of timber and animals, certain woods and forests, many towns and villages, then known, have now disappeared. The Zebra, they say, was once common in the north of Spain, and hence the name of the Zebrera Mountains. On these subjects I am directed to consult a book, *Las Monterías del Rey D. Alonso*. Some say, the population of Spain may be about nine millions, others eleven. We may doubt the accuracy of the methods hitherto employed to procure the true state; but their academy is taking some pains in it, and may in time succeed. The church establishments, we are told, consist of about 150,000 of both sexes, which I suspect is under the truth. Of these, 55,000 are friars, and 26,000 nuns.

As the national revenue cannot be much increased, nor can they long pursue any effectual



fectual plan of improving it, they cannot acquire much credit, nor give sufficient security for paying even the interest of their loans, beyond the life of the reigning prince. Some gremios, or corporations, have borrowed and lent money as low as two and one-half *per cent.* but not to government; for their late loans, it is said, will cost them ten or twelve *per cent.* Money being the only thing plenty or cheap in the country, is at once the cause and effect of its poverty, and shews what little employment there is for it in commerce, agriculture, or any improvements.

The Spaniards have much natural ease and grace in whatever they do, particularly in dancing, in singing, and in managing the cloak, fan, *manto*, &c. A peculiar and charming character of the female face and figure appears in some provinces; generally brunettes, with sparkling speaking eyes, vivacity and expression of the whole physiognomy, beyond every thing of the kind in the rest of Europe,



Europe, with a certain softness, and yet active flexibility of make; but these, and other particulars, are only to be seen, and not explained.

Contemplating on this old and worn-down nation suggests an opinion that every government or society requires certain changes or innovations from time to time, in order to restore activity, and awaken men from a kind of lethargy, towards which old institutions have a gradual tendency. But to attempt the recovery of this nation is probably now too late. On recapitulating the numerous requisites necessary to her restoration, we may conclude, that she cannot rise again to her former strength and greatness till so many changes are brought about, as to make such recovery very distant and improbable. She cannot certainly rise till she is freed from all subjection to France, and perhaps not till after several wars with her rival power; nor till her government is entirely reformed, or rather changed, and differently constituted on the old model with  
some

some improvements; nor till agriculture can flourish, for which purpose her laws of tenures and inheritance, her religion, colonies, maxims of commerce, manners, as well as government, must all undergo considerable changes; not till they have roads, inland navigation, and commerce, to pay for them; nor till their plans of finance are quite reformed, their taxes better regulated, laid, and levied, so as to find money and credit for public expences, for necessary improvements, and longer wars; and not till the *alcavala*, in particular, be totally abolished. Not till the nobility live more in the country, and cultivate their estates, or rather parcel them out on proper leases, or *foros*, for others to cultivate, and sell or dispose of them as they please\*. Not till industry and manufactories can find sufficient security and en-

\* You would be surprised at the smallness of the net rental of some of the very extensive estates in this country. If you had only temporary servants and stewards, instead of rich farmers, with long leases, on your estates, you would probably soon receive as little rent from them as they do here from these, and your island would become a desert, occupied only by some dirty towns, like this peninsula.

courage-

couragement ; nor till their trade, laid more open and freed from hurtful restraints, shall produce to them beneficial, instead of pernicious effects. Not till they are better qualified for war by discipline, experience, industry, population. In short, I believe nothing can restore her, without first a wise and free constitution of government, which without doubt is omnipotent. But all this is quite improbable, and almost out of sight : hence it is perhaps better for you to have her as a known enemy than as a burdensome friend ; at least till she totally change her system and alliances. If Spain should seem to rise with regard to you, it can only be by your sinking. You might, to be sure, both rise together, if you could both be wise enough to become more closely united, new model their wretched government, and reciprocally communicate the numerous advantages, commercial and political, of which your respective countries are capable. No two nations can be much better situated for such mutual benefits and assistance, and for the closest connections. The produce of the one  
country,

country, and the manufactories of the other, might be made to promote and increase both to a great extent; and probably in no other way could Spain make her subjects cultivators, and increase her natural productions to so great a degree.

Had this nation been blessed with successors worthy of Ferdinand and Isabella, equal, or similar to them in wisdom and knowledge of the country and its constitution, ready to adopt the discoveries of the age as they rose, and qualified to second the dispositions which then appeared in the nation towards every species of improvement, Spain might still have been the first nation in Europe. Had Charles V. fortunately been brought up in the country, or had he only consulted Cardinal Ximenes, and some others of the sensible and liberal Spaniards of those days, he might thence have adopted or improved upon the ideas and maxims of those his excellent predecessors: but he came full fraught with his German ideas of government, with Flemish  
and



and Austrian friends and prejudices, which in time blasted the flowers, and even the root, of all the Spanish improvements, in the abolition of the then growing constitution of their government; and they must probably continue to decline till it is planted again. The reign of Ferdinand and Isabella is the period of Spanish history, notwithstanding the bigotry and errors of the times, the most deserving attention. Dr. Robertson, or some other of your curious and learned men, might easily come over here, and travel and write alternately, which is probably the best way to produce a history useful to man.

By so degrading a picture of the decline of Spain, you will see I do not mean to impeach the native national character, which, on the contrary, I respect and consider as one of the first in the world. But the nation is one thing, and the government another. I hope to have made it appear, that they are the best sort of people, and under the worst kind of government of any in Europe; and that the moral qualities



ties of the Spaniards may be considered as the very best kind of materials that enter into the composition of the human character; but that these are lost and mismanaged by the most defective species of government and legislature that can well be devised, short of Asiatic despotism.

## L E T T E R XXXV.

*Military and Geographical Observations.  
Conclusion.*

To Mr. A. J.

THE few military observations I wish to give you here, I shall endeavour to abridge. In their military affairs, there is little remarkable: they keep following the rest of Europe, and particularly the French, though at a distance; they conform at last, though so slowly that they are left behind. Till this reign there has been but little alteration since Philip V. frenchified their little army: and the few late regulations are of small importance.

The people have still some of the qualities essential to the formation of good troops: they are naturally brave, steady, temperate, patient, of strong nerves, and  
very

very fit for persevering enterprize: but, perhaps cruel, vindictive, violent, when under the influence of strong passions, to which they are subject with all their apparent plegma: so that the *fort* of their character is not perhaps now so *à-propos* to the times, nor to the present mode of war as it was formerly; and certain qualities which might then have been of use, or at least of no impediment, may not be now so well adapted to the promptitude, obedience, and activity, of modern discipline: at times, sullen, indolent, proud, obstinate, I should apprehend a mutinous spirit on some important occasions: so that we may doubt their soon making again the figure in war which they have done formerly, in other times and manners: at least, not without excellent officers, an active war, and good discipline, which are not likely to happen soon: but if they should happen, and their government, their population improve, their good qualities would be seen to predominate, and they might again become the first troops in the world. Their horse might soon be made excellent, if well

appointed and commanded: they would make up in velocity what they want in weight, and might be the first and most useful cavalry in Europe. But their fine breed of horses has declined, and cannot, I believe, be well restored, but with agriculture and the other arts.

They have attempted a method and regularity in recruiting their army, which, with some improvement, might answer better for us than for them. viz. each corps to be recruited from the province or district from whence it is named, and each fifth man taken when wanted. If they were to be more frequently quartered in their respective districts, and a certain local *esprit de corps*, and a connection kept up, it might have more good effects, and fewer bad. With us, while under parliamentary and provincial control, and if directed by a really military government; the whole body of the people formed into a militia, which should supply the army with men for five or seven years service each; the army to be employed in peace on useful public works; such

such an establishment might make us a military nation. Though their army here, and this mode of recruiting, tend to depopulate the country which can ill bear it, and to destroy industry where there is already so little, these defects would soon be supplied by a good government: but that source, and all others, are here deficient.

From the two opposite extremities of this kingdom, Catalonia and the northern provinces, might be formed excellent regiments: but you know they have had no wars of late sufficient to form troops, and can have but few great officers: those who served in Italy are mostly worn out; and we may doubt of their having now among them much of that military enthusiasm and activity of mind necessary to produce more. We know they have still, among the field officers, some military spirits, like most other nations; but it would require a war of some length and action to form a sufficient number.



War, if it could be well regulated, and kept within bounds, seems necessary to a nation at certain intervals ; were it only to call forth some exertions in our nature, which are otherwise lost, and to prevent the increasing evil effects of luxury, civilization, and repose, which gradually lead to timid indolent habits, to a shameless dread of death, and at last, of every trifling danger and inconvenience. War is likewise so much less tremendous in fact, than to the fancy, that it ought perhaps to be seen sometimes by nations, and frequently by all the individuals of the profession : to them both practice and science are necessary. Theory, without experience, can never suffice to form a great officer, though the only foundation on which such an important character can be established.

A whole nation formed to war, and another with only an army so formed, would be found very different in strength, dignity, and exertion : but few seem yet to consider these things properly, except the Swiss. I suppose nothing but actual invasion

vation can ever prevail on us islanders to regulate ourselves for war. We feel so secure, surrounded by the sea, and depending on the precarious defence of fleets, that we are apt to relax into military negligence during peace: hence our wars become so expensive, and so badly managed, especially at the beginning; and hence so few great officers have been or can be produced among us.

Most modern governments have imbibed a timid and jealous policy, and dread granting to the people military arms and regulations, which would have so many beneficial effects on manners, police, and render them so much more orderly and manageable; and not more, but less dangerous to the state, or public—to themselves. Since the people, in most countries, have been disarmed, under the insidious idea of enjoying their ease, and only paying for their defence, and have been thereby delivered over defenceless into the power of their defenders, who thence become a separate, and the worst, part of society,

the best government will be known by restoring to the people their importance, with the use of their arms, and regulating them accordingly. If their time be now totally filled up in supporting life by supplying the luxuries of the great, and the follies of the state, let them lay their arms by their side, till they can find time to learn their use, which their governments, when wise, will soon find for them; and will thereby prevent war.

I can conceive a corps or little army, when not too exclusively military, as in time of peace, to be so constituted as to form a tolerable model for civil society. Civil and military institutions should be brought nearer and more similar to each other: both are improved by attending to the smaller divisions of men, as to squads, messes, tythings, as wisely done of old by Alfred, and lately by the best officers. The failure and defects of the feudal system should not discourage us from attempting other similar institutions with improvements: as that of a general circulating militia,

litia, from which a small but active standing army might be constantly supplied; and by the men returning frequently into society, the true military spirit might be retained. In the subdivisions and establishment of an army, something like the Roman legion we should consider as the best pattern; and we should give those principles a fair trial before we attempt to improve upon them. Our present corps or regiment are certainly too small and helpless little handfuls of men, with few resources. In some of the military colonies of the Romans, was probably established the proper junction of the civil and military life: the detail of some of these might be well worth the investigation \*.

If you will not all learn, as you ought, to fight by land, it is to be wished you would be attentive to the constant improvement of your navy. You seemed there,

\* It is hoped our good friend General Melville will favour the world with an account of some of the many curious and important parts of the Roman methods and institutions, which he has discovered with such great pains and ingenuity.



for a while, to forget that every thing is progressive and nothing stationary in this world. Your navy should be always improving, always respectable, and in great readiness, even during peace; with 10,000 marines, at least, commanded and well disciplined by your sea officers, who would thence become more military. You should likewise establish the best possible schools for construction, where all theory and mathematics should be taught and rendered more common, in addition to your already excellent practical knowledge: and from thence, should be appointed some good engineers for your ports and dock-yards. Your warrant officers likewise, masters, gunners, schoolmasters, in great numbers, should be kept up and employed, and nurseries of such men provided, during peace. Though every thing cannot be kept in readiness for war, at the public expence, the sources whence they are to proceed should surely be attended to, and some provision be made of the most necessary parts before they are wanted, as a foundation to build upon.

Though



Though Spain, among many other advantages of situation, is defended by an excellent land frontier, the Pyrenées; yet it has now many weak fides, and is even comparatively weak on this its strongest side. Their friends, the French, being in possession of the principal passes, they are reduced to means of defence which would be quite insufficient, especially with their naval inferiority. Their present frontier places, as Figueras, Fonterabia, &c. might be easily masked, and left behind without much risk, by an army from France, as it could so readily be supplied by sea, sometimes by a voyage only of a few leagues. The weaknesses of their three principal king's ports, they are at great pains to conceal by such supercilious precautions, as are quite unusual, and incompatible with common commercial intercourse. But they will probably yet long remain the most anti-commercial nation in Europe, and their public councils continue to counteract all the advantages for trade and prosperity, which nature has so lavishly bestowed on the country. Even their best maxims and

regula-

regulations now in meditation, civil, ecclesiastical, commercial, &c. will prove, I doubt, only so many attempts to reconcile irreconcilable contradictions, while the government remains of so bad a model and construction. I may be mistaken; but the more I contemplate on this nation, the more I am convinced it can never rise again, but by a closer connection with England.

Many more reasons, for some of these perhaps bold, though well considered, opinions might be found than I have yet alleged to you; but as we are not attempting to open their eyes, which would be difficult, and yours do not want it, I shall not trouble you, nor myself, any longer with such speculations.

From the memorandums of other various journies through other parts of Spain, little more appears fit to be transmitted in this way. I am sorry to find some late excursions not near so agreeable as such used formerly to be, when you may remember our falling forth in quest  
of

of new objects, of difficulties and adventures. A few years, and a small change of circumstances, make a great difference in a man's life, taste, and habits. However, I think the most unpleasant journey, or campaign, is generally remembered with pleasure: the worst parts are gilded over, or disappear, and the pleasant are beautified by absence and recollection.

To acquire a general and military idea of a country, I think the rivers are the leading features first to be examined; and then the country between them, first from maps, and then from chosen heights, observing, at the same time, the course of the mountains, and their passes. The course of rivers, and ranges of mountains, will thence be seen to divide a country commonly into a few large districts, and beginning thus with general ideas or outlines, the particulars are more easily filled up, and a clear idea of the whole is sooner obtained, than by attempting to be too particular at first; a common fault with little military minds, and many others. In what-

ever country you travel, you should never forget your profession. The *coup d'œil militaire, ou géographique*, which are similar, may certainly be acquired or communicated. Frederic, I dare say, could readily give you some of his rapid and general ideas on that subject. I hope you will be able to see him before he leaves this world. He is worth going far to see. You may, from him, catch ideas and fire enough to last you a life-time, and make you a great foldier. But I doubt he is not so much of a Lycurgus as an Alexander. I often wish he had travelled to England. Yet *à-propos* to Alexander, I often think, that if he had lived to settle somewhere on the Euphrates, and had once got Aristotle, and others of the Greek sages about him, he would have reformed, and got the better of his follies, and might have proved the greatest legislator, as well as the greatest general, that ever lived; and would have been the only sovereign, from the first Cyrus down to the present time, fit to reform and improve Asia, its people, manners, and modes of government. You see  
the



the immense importance of education. Philip was right, and must have had a great mind, in perceiving the consequence of having such a master as Aristotle for his son. But as to Germany, though fertile in great officers, I fear it is not quite the soil to produce great lawgivers. For that rarest of all characters, we must not yet look to the north: indeed it is hard to say where to look for such an uncommon being.

Some minds are synthetically, and others analytically, disposed: those begin naturally from general principles, and thence descend easily and rapidly through all the consequences: the others, from particulars, creep slowly up towards the general principles; and though they may not get so far, are often firmer and surer than the others as far as they go. Both are useful when properly employed. The one, being the most common, is of great and daily use; the other, more rarely wanted and produced, is only required on certain great occasions, and is fitter to direct the whole than to execute a part of it. An Euclid, a Newton, a Frederic, for example, in  
order



order to examine a country, would probably go to some of the higher parts first, to acquire a general and connected idea or plan of the whole, and thence descend to examine particulars, by some system already formed on the general view. He who knows how to distinguish and employ those different talents may govern the world.

Your method of collecting the maps, published in their respective countries, is a very good way. I wish D'Anville, or somebody else, would establish a good and lasting geographical school for all the executive parts. Rivers are of such consequence in the world, that it should perhaps be divided, and its parts distinguished and denominated, by them, as it is fertilized, and has probably been peopled, by their means. A map that had little more than all the streams well traced, distinguishing those that are dry in summer, would shew the nature of a country better than all the other parts of geographical engraving, which we take so much pains about, and by which we only blacken and confuse our charts, without gaining any proportional  
advan-

advantage in distinct or useful ideas. By considering the streams of my almost white map, wherein I can legibly mark what I please, and asking a few questions of an inhabitant or a traveller, we shall be able to gain better general notions of the rise and make of the country, for military and other purposes, and much sooner than you by all your black maps and long descriptions.

Think not that I tell you all of what might be observed of these countries where I pass, or even where I reside: I deal in generals, and do not mean to give you half even of those things that can be told; and you know there are many incommunicable ideas which you must take the trouble to go for, as they cannot be brought nor sent to you; a circumstance which travellers are not always aware of. Many observations I hope will here occur to you, which may have escaped us all. Travelling oftener on business than from curiosity, we have not always made a point of seeing every thing. Your method of taking memorandums of what should be seen is very good:

good: but you will find, that the curiosity must be uncommonly powerful that lets nothing escape in this country. Where travelling is so far from agreeable, we are often more disposed to proceed on our journey, than to stop or step aside to see what we are then easily inclined to believe may not be worth the trouble. Various disagreeable circumstances, peculiar to some parts of Spain, may be too apt to put you out of conceit with the whole of it, and interrupt that persevering attention and good humour, so necessary to a traveller. No one can see every thing, and what may be neglected, becomes a consideration of some importance. In the selection, you must doubtless have recourse to others. In our present secluded situation, far from friends and advice, you must excuse my assisting your selection, or attempting more particular directions, and accept of these few general opinions, and decisions of a doubtful judgment; the reflections and observations of a passenger, rather than the particulars of a professed traveller.

L E T T E R S

F R O M

P O R T U G A L,

T O

F R I E N D S I N E N G L A N D.

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L E T T E R I.

*Galicia, and North of Portugal. Vigo.  
Spanish Councils. Defensive War. Industry,  
Taste, Science of the Portuguese. Water  
Finders. Frontier Coast.*

Oporto, 1779.

WE now proceed from Galicia to Portugal, a country about which I shall not probably have much that is new to tell you; as, by our commerce and alliance with this nation, many of our countrymen are become pretty well acquainted with it, and you may meet with people in London, who can give you better information than myself on the subject; so that a few general observations and reflec-



tions, as they occur, may appear to me sufficient.

We were forced, by an excess of Spanish caution, to depart before the time we intended, and to make a circuit by the most difficult paths and mountains, with the children, sometimes in litters, and at others in carts; at night, some wretched hovel to receive us, and which did not always afford even straw to sleep on: but children are excellent travellers; hardships are diversion to them.

In the Spanish service, the foreigners are more rigid and over-loyal than the natives. It has been remarked, that *renegades* are the greatest zealots. In a country with any pretensions to civilization, it is hardly possible to be treated with more rudeness and obduracy than we have been by one of those gentlemen, a native of Ireland, who happened to command at St. Jago. However, we are indebted to him for the enjoyment of many delightful scenes, with which those mountains in Galicia and the north of Portugal abound; frequently cut by narrow vales, little rapid streams, with a variety of trees, and some cottages. In  
the



the more direct road which I went before, nearer the coast, there are several vallies rather spacious and rich; as that of Padron, of Pontivedra, Tuy. Wherever you see a river in the map of this country, you may suppose a vale full of beauties. We found several of the poor ragged fishermen on that coast, who had been farmers, but were forced to abandon the cultivation of their lands, though their own property, because they found it was only working for the king, the curate, and the convent; you may thence judge of the state of agriculture, of property, church, &c.

Vigo is a spacious inlet of the sea, and a noble port, and might be easily made much better. Its vicinity to Portugal being considered by the Spanish government as an objection to making it a king's port, is a motive scarcely more honourable than that of a corps of Jews, which was once formed for the Turkish service; but when ready to march, they begged for a guard to protect them from the populace. Spain would perhaps protect herself, if she could, by distance and desolation. The over-caution

of her councils has not unfrequently carried her beyond the usual limits of political absurdity, and sometimes to those of cruelty. Had she been placed in a great continent, she might probably have desolated the countries around her for defence, like some other great barbarous monarchies. The same barbarian motive is given in this country (Portugal) for not making roads. The want of military science and discipline is ever the source of timidity, and of cautions foolish or inadequate, like the bird that hides only its head, and thinks itself safe. As the military arts declined, men prepared for war by casing themselves up in armour to be smothered, or by shutting themselves up in inaccessible rocks and castles to be starved. Nations have not entirely thrown off their ignorance with their armour. Only a few seem yet to know, that national strength consists in an active and moving force, and that the safest state of defence is the being always in readiness to attack. The change from the feudal militia, to the present mode of standing armies, was slow and awkward: the former was given up before the other was ready; all

all was for a time confusion, and ignorance of the true military principles. We have not probably any where adopted the best defensive establishments for our present manners and state of society. I believe I mentioned my opinion of the best mode of military power and defence for our country. To reconcile the opposing difficulties that attend the choice of some of the best of those measures, is one of the most important political problems that remains yet to be solved by practice.

Coming from Spain, by this route, Portugal seems to have the advantage, at least in these northern parts of it. Others, who come from Madrid to Lisbon, on comparing the two nations, do not, I observe, conceive such advantageous opinions of this: but in that route they pass through Alentejo, and some of the most barren parts of this kingdom. Here we presently perceive marks of greater industry and plenty than in Spain; better markets, farmers, cattle, ploughs, some fences, lime and other manures; more expert carpenters and other necessary trades; better

linen, leather, hats, more drefs and cleanliness on holidays, but not in their houses ; there they are still equally, or more dirty and careless, and remarkably indifferent about beds : a Portuguese, still more than a Spaniard, is accustomed to sleep any where. *Para ellos, to da la calle es cama.* But here more of the rural taste for country houses appears, more skill and industry in conveying water, and in the laying out and management of their grounds : and this taste and style of improvement seem to be of old standing, and to have been formerly better than now : there are indications of former science, from which some of the practice still remains : their history accounts for it. About the time of their great discoveries and establishments in the east, you know, they were a learned and enterprising nation, and were guided by the first royal family of philosophers that the world had seen for a long time before : and they have probably contributed more towards the improvement of mankind than any other princes in modern history, by encouraging mathematical and nautical knowledge, and promoting a spirit of research

and



and discovery, which, from them, began to spread over Europe. Much science and good sense appear in many of their establishments and operations, and in the spirit with which Prince Henry placed his academy at Cape St. Vincent's, in view of the ocean which he meant to explore. Their money weights and measures, instituted then, shew more knowledge of true principles than is yet to be met with in any other government. Like us at present, they made various researches and experiments to discover an universal standard measure; and after all, they wisely followed the Greeks and Romans; as lately discovered by our good consul Whitehead here, together with many other interesting particulars concerning those respectable princes, which we hope he will communicate to the world.

The arts generally advance together, and it appears, that agriculture then flourished here with the rest. In many places, the people are still in the habits of leading water a great way, along the sides of the hills, for the advantage of watering



a great extent of country below ; or sometimes to bring it to a private house or estate. This, with their early methods of distributing it in towns, evince a knowledge of hydrostatics, and of mathematical principles, which did not appear in public any where else for a long time after. And there are remains of country seats and improvements, sufficient to shew that the nobility had then a taste for a country life, and encouraged the useful arts and prosperity around them.

The *water finders* form a separate trade or profession in this country. They pretend to possess superior gifts or instincts, and to be a distinct race, and by means of a few *hocus pocus* tricks, contrive to make a great mystery of their profession. I believe it may be discovered, by a watchful attention, pretty nearly where to dig for water, from various indications of nature ; as from the make or fall of the grounds, the state of vegetation, the visible evaporation, &c.

This

This little kingdom possesses two very considerable advantages, the one for national strength, and the other for commerce; its land frontier, and its sea coast; the first is defensible by means of some skill and exertion, and not so strong by nature as to induce its defenders to sleep; and the coast seems to invite the whole world to trade with them, by its situation, its beauties, ports, and produce.

## L E T T E R II.

*Form, &c. of Portugal. Vegetable and animal Life. Character. Count la Lippe.*

I INTENDED to have begun my very brief account of this country, by giving you some general idea of its make or form; but I find it more difficult than I expected. I believe I mentioned to you, or friend C., the coast of this whole peninsula being like a lace set round an old garment, and such is probably the case with Africa, Arabia, and all the peninsulas and continents of the world. This coast, from Cape Finisterre to Cape St. Vincent's, is however a very good and principal part of our lace. You see in the map the importance of its geographical situation; open to the great ocean where the ships of all nations pass, containing the mouths, and the best parts of the best rivers of the peninsula; the countries on their banks are  
the

the most fertile and delightful, and very different from the Spanish plains, which those rivers seem to water without effect; but they enrich and beautify the mountains of Portugal, and might still be made to do both more effectually. To the south, this country varies into larger divisions, and more of them sandy and barren. Most of Alentejo seems a continuation of the great Spanish plain of Estremadura or Guadiana, which interrupt a little the roughness and mountains of their frontier; but Sierra Morena presently rises again in another direction, terminating in Cape St. Vincent, its skirts and vallies forming the beautiful little country of Algarve. You may observe how the river Guadiana, turning suddenly to the left at Badajoz, seems to force its way through the range of Sierra Morena, with immense precipices for its banks. If it had gone straight forward to the sea, somewhere to the south of St. Ubal, as we should naturally expect in following its course to Badajoz, the great arid plains of Alentejo might have been benefited by it.

In



In this peninsula, there seem to be different climates in the same latitude, which is often the case on our globe. The great Spanish plains, and the Portuguese hills and vallies, though under the same parallels, shew some remarkable differences in soils, plants, animals, and the general characters of animal life. This is more observable in Indostan, South America, &c. These Portuguese mountains, first by their rise, and then by their gradual descent into the Atlantic, may be said at once to form the country, and to divide and defend it from Spain. If you dabble in natural history, chuse the most essential and important parts, and leave the minutiae to others. You cannot otherwise be great as a soldier and a senator, who ought to know every thing, and be engrossed by nothing. I wish you to begin every subject synthetically from general principles, like Euclid, &c. Though some of you English affect to despise Buffon, I like his method, and his ideas.

We may now hope to know the relative heights of distant countries, if important,  
by



by means of barometers. At General Elliot's desire, I have just been measuring some of the heights of Gibraltar by Ramsden's portable barometers: I believe the method may be made to answer generally well, by the help of Colonel Roy's corrections, which may be yet farther improved by experiment, in allowing for heat. I believe the plains of Castile, for example, will be found to be higher than generally thought; above the sea, and above those in France. The plain of Granada is of a considerable and obvious height, which might be easily measured. Here, if we consider the length and fall of this river Douro, and that the water that now passes my window may come from beyond Burgos, Soria, or Avila, and, after many windings and rapids, has gone above two hundred leagues, allowing only ten feet fall *per* league, gives two thousand feet height for the great plains of Old Castile. Their great height, with the nature of the soil and strata, may be among the causes of their drought.

Many

Many of the Portuguese vallies are highly productive and luxuriant : and yet I think the productions of this, and of several other warmer countries, are not so rich and nutritive as they appear, and that most of the fruits, if we except the grape and orange, shew better than they are in reality : they seem to me often weak and watery, as if not sufficiently concocted, or nutritive ; and as if forced up in a hurry by sun and water, without sufficient time and natural cultivation. And I think something similar is observable both in vegetable and animal life here. The men, though often of a good square make, and active appearance, and have many other good qualities as men and soldiers, yet few of them are capable of any great and continued exertions of strength, resolution, or perseverance. There is a kind of female levity, weakness, and sensibility of character, which renders them more subject to sudden fits of passion than to lasting habits.—Peculiarly disposed to love and devotion ;—with more sensibility than wisdom ;—*pocos y locos*, the Spaniards say of them ;—they resemble the French in  
many

many ways, and are very different from the Spaniards. I believe we rather confound these two neighbouring nations, and fancy a character of both which suits neither.

Though the same kind of government and religion, a similarity of manners and opinions, may have brought them to an apparent resemblance in the eyes of strangers; yet on examination, they are obviously of a different race and character. The Portuguese is naturally the most docile and complaisant of all creatures, and the Spaniard the most obstinate: the one seems to be moved by a kind of volatile feminine spirit of sensibility, and the other by one of a nature more masculine, steady, obdurate, and determined: the one obsequious, obedient *muy rendido hasta derri-tirse*; his manner and language the most feeling and *carinosa*; generally desirous to please, ready enough to learn and receive impressions, and may be formed to what you desire; though, by turns, equally careless and indolent, weak, changeable, superstitious; he forgets sooner than he

had learned. Whereas the Spaniard is ever the same proud, obstinate, lazy, but manly character, and will not easily receive or follow any impressions or motives but his own: by his religion and loyalty he has been enslaved, which by any other means would have been very difficult: with a high sensibility, and a determined character, he may be led to be vindictive and cruel; with strong nerves, and a persevering mind, he may be very fit for desperate enterprize and conquest. But as such qualities are not now the chief requisites in the character of a soldier, nor so well adapted to the ready obedience and activity of modern discipline, I would perhaps now rather chuse to recruit in Portugal than in Spain. Indeed, we have lately seen a great officer, Count de la Lippe, form a very good little army of these people, in less time than could probably have been done with the people of almost any other nation. But they will soon lose their best habits and discipline, if the least neglected, and will relapse into their usual sloth and indolence, of which there is already too much appearance: al-  
ready



ready lulled to sleep by false policy and religion, every thing seems now neglected except the church: their most devout sovereigns amuse them with religious processions, with building convents and churches; while the army, the garrisons, the navy, are all neglected, and half the commissions left vacant. If such measures are continued, they cannot long be fit for war, and hence not very long a nation.

In every country something of importance may be learned. To follow the ideas of that great officer Count de la Lippe, and see what he did, and intended, for the defence of this country, would be one of the finest military lessons you could have. You should see Elvas, which he fortified, and examine all his excellent ideas of fortification and artillery: his safe flanks, parapets, resources, carriages, modes of economising power and space, of making powder, in short his excellent ideas on almost every military subject: and then his general plans of defending this frontier, and of attacking Spain.



## L E T T E R    III.

*Policy.    Industry.    Character.    Law.*

**T**HIS little nation, under the management of their late minister, the M. de Pombal, with all his faults and cruelties, had certainly begun to make some material advances and exertions, and to be again considered as of some importance in the scale of Europe. Those advances were chiefly owing to an intimate connection with England, and an enmity to Spain: both these powerful motives to national exertion, it is feared, are now fast wearing out, and no other can probably remain, sufficient to support their activity, and prevent the fabric, so little advanced, from falling to ruin. The present weak policy, of secretly courting the friendship of their natural enemy, will probably be productive of the worst consequences to them. It is to be feared, from the Queen-mother's late journey

journey to Madrid, that Portugal may now be considered as an appendage to Spain, and a member of the Bourbon alliance. Such are the consequences of your mad American war; our allies will all forsake us, from an opinion of our inevitable decline, and of the rise of America. These considerations, besides her family motives, might determine this sensible old Queen to place this kingdom under the tutelage of Don Carlos. But though apparently a prudent measure, it will be found, in time, to have been but a hasty and timid female policy, and would not have happened in the times of a Pombal or a Pitt. Though this kingdom may soon become again a province to Spain, that monarchy, which is already too large to be well governed, is not likely to gain much additional force or advantage by the acquisition. And as the other nations will hardly agree to such a change without a war, in that war will consist the only chance of safety for Portugal, provided she can be kept up to any tolerable degree of military preparation; but this we shall now see Spain exerting

all her secret influence to prevent. Indeed, if Spain could recover her ancient government, and then add and incorporate Portugal, the advantages might be very considerable to both, and this peninsula might rise to be a very great nation.

The seeds of improvement have again been sown in this country with those of luxury, though the produce now again becomes doubtful. Their wants have been lately increasing, and those must increase the demand for the exertions of industry somewhere: hence more improvements have been attempted here than in Spain; and being of a more governable size, their attempts have generally succeeded better. In the northern provinces of this peninsula, and in Catalonia, the people are the most industrious, and their industry is supported under many oppressions, because they are now accustomed to live well. The Portuguese are more active and diligent since they began to love fine cloaths, and since their pride has changed its objects, from the black cloak and spectacles, with  
an

an affectation of sanctity and wisdom, and having nothing to do; though some such people are still to be seen in certain parts of both these kingdoms. Certain kinds and degrees of luxury and expence become a source of activity among the people. It were to be wished you could change the taste of some of your lower classes, from drinking, to other more elegant and useful pleasures. The puritanism of your reformation, and your wretched Sunday police, are the sources of low debauch; impediments and misfortunes to an industrious nation. Might you not now venture to open your theatres on Sundays? and republish King James's book of sports, with corrections and amendments? After church and school hours, let the young and old take some diversions, such as tend to promote dress, and discourage drunkenness.

The people of this nation, as you may observe in their history, are remarkable for sudden changes, without sufficient forethought. Their two great revolutions were both quick and violent, and equally with-

out plan, or system of government; first their recovery from the Moors, and then from Spain, whose depredations they must yet long feel. After admiring them as the discoverers and conquerors of the East, we are presently surprised to see them so easily beaten and subdued by the first European power that follows them there. I have somewhere learned an anecdote, that soon after those learned times of Emanuel, an enquiry was made for any one who could teach algebra to one of the princes, and that no such person could be found in the kingdom. Such men as Pombal and La Lippe, you see, could suddenly turn them again into a respectable power, and almost an industrious people; and now we already begin to see them becoming very quickly as idle, corrupted, and superstitious as ever. On considering them individually, we find more than ordinary inconsistencies in their conduct and character; such as the most penurious avarice, joined to a thoughtless sloth, love of idleness and pleasure: and very opposite passions seem to actuate them by turns, and in very quick succession.



sion. They are like overgrown children, always falling before temptation, and always making fresh and ineffectual resolutions: and the Roman Catholic superstition remarkably promotes this weakness, and purposely debilitates the human character, in order to render it more manageable by the priesthood. Like children too, they are often amiable and endearing; their political bad success has not been owing to their character, but, as usual, to their *positive* bad religion, and to their *negative* bad government, or total want of a civil constitution: nay, it is perhaps the very character that a great lawgiver (if such a being could yet be produced) would chuse to work upon.

From the example of these two nations, we should be tempted to believe, that where there is most law, there is least justice; as well as with the greatest appearance of religion, the least moral conduct. This country is likewise overwhelmed with laws and lawyers, with needless and numerous regulations, all of which seem to embarrass

much more than they rectify: various writings are necessary on every the smallest transaction, and all are found insufficient: hardly any house can be finished, or any property possessed, without tedious and repeated law-suits: the sale of the smallest thing by auction must be attended with writings; but security is thence diminished; and one tedious process, carried through all the successive appeals and tribunals, may only prove the source of many others in future: the loser revives his pretensions on the first change of system, or of friends at court. Justice, and every thing in these two nations, is obtained by *impenos*. You see there cannot be any permanent security of property, or certainty of justice, nor indeed any considerable advances in arts or industry, without a free and permanent constitution of the state.

In the course of civilization, of arts and refinement, the great and increasing body of lawyers probably merit more attention and regulation than has been usually bestowed on them. Every society of human beings,

beings, be it a nation, a corporation, or a company, we know will act with a certain secret *esprit de corps*, or bias towards its own interests, against all mankind; and in a manner more unjust and unfeeling than individuals: and every corporate body, if not controlled, would tyrannize over all the rest. Hence the great difficulties of regulating the lesser bodies, of which the great one, the nation, consists; and of forming a system of government, wherein the different parts may not combine against the rest of the community. If any nation should ever, through all the steps of improvement, escape every other yoke, it may at last fall a prey to law itself; and the greatest part of the property, and thence the government, might be gradually thrown into the hands of a powerful body of lawyers. They have many advantages in these countries, where there are so few gentlemen students of law, and where the people are so universally ignorant. I think they everywhere dictate the terms or words of most laws, and by that means, probably, create much work for future members of  
their

their corps, in future interpretations. I leave you to investigate the consequences. The termination of most governments seems to be that of absolute monarchy, as the last desperate remedy ; and of the different species of tyranny, it is perhaps the most tolerable, at least in Europe. As the best and most durable form of society is probably that which consists of the most complete system of mutual control, and as you are confessedly before the rest of the world in these, if you can but go on to improve when necessary, your government bids fair to outlive the rest ; and in the British isles, after the general wreck, some remnants of lost liberty may long remain.

## L E T T E R IV.

*Manners and Education. Inquisitorial and Monastic Spirit. Toleration. Romish Church, &c.*

**N**O.—I do not forget my favourite text, and should perhaps have added in my last, if there had been room, that it is only by manners and education that nations, or their governments, can be restored: those must rise and fall together. Your great Bacons, Miltons, Lockes, &c. have all seen and insisted much on the importance of education; and we are sorry to see their opinion has had so little effect. In some ancient nations, proper teachers, the philosophers, and others, were probably men of more consequence in society than such men are with us. A good school in each of your parishes would remedy more evils, and ultimately improve the constitution of your government more, than all your efforts



forts without them. I have been told, that Charles I. had some good plans on this subject, and might have done some good if he had been let alone. I think we are nearly agreed, that the general superiority of the lower ranks in the northern parts of our island is owing to their education; and that the ignorance of your country squires becoming almost proverbial, must have had some foundation: nay, I fear your present public danger and probable decline might be traced to the same source; the absurdity of some late measures cannot well be understood, nor explained, without taking ignorance into the account. So many independent country gentlemen, if they had had a tolerable education, with a little travel and knowledge of foreign affairs, could never surely have been brought to agree to such measures as that of taxing their own colonies in any other way but their own; or in the present state of Europe, to that of carrying a war across the Atlantic, under such obvious disadvantages, and against the prejudices of all the world, to subdue what could never be worth the conquest;

conquest; and then to the beginning at the wrong end, and in the wrong way; and without knowing the nature of the tools they had to work with, or of the materials they had to work upon, or even the true state of parties and affairs at home: How are we to account for so much ignorance and illiberality in the first and most generous nation of Europe, or of the world?

On enquiring after some old friends and acquaintance here, military and others, men of merit and information; alas! we find they are almost all gone to the Inquisition: that horrid tribunal, it seems, is again let loose in this reign against real merit and knowledge. The men most likely to improve their brethren have ever been the most obnoxious to this church. The Roman Catholic system, from the time of its being established in its full inquisitorial and monastic severity, has surely been more inimical to the advancement of human knowledge and improvement, than any other superstition that ever was invented; it seems better calculated to destroy all the little remnants of happiness that civil tyranny

ranny might be forced or chuse to spare! and nothing could well have been contrived to render men more useless to society, more detached, more indifferent, and often inimical, to each other. Professing to teach universal benevolence, it has in effect made them hate and persecute one another. But it has been instituted with so much art, that it cannot be easily changed or removed, and we know the difficulties of reforming it: till that is more effectually accomplished, its professors will contrive to throw the blame of all the mischief it occasions on their opponents. They have here succeeded wonderfully well in creating a sure vacancy for themselves, by rendering the civil power incompetent to govern the minds of the people, so as to render their own supplemental aid necessary. The Romish conclave has probably been the most artful body of politicians known in history. They have, as they thought, used precautions against every danger, and prepared a salve for every sore. They have had a hand in all the institutions of importance to society: in education, marriage, inheritance. Al-

most

most every tribunal has been instituted, influenced, or controlled, by the church. If every other guard and precaution should fail, they had the bugbears of superstition always ready to frighten reason out of her way. But that church may now soon serve the world as an example, to shew how insufficient artifice alone is to govern mankind, and that plain honesty and perseverance may hope to prevail against all imposition.

Every church probably requires the wholesome hand of control as much, at least, as any other power in the state. To hit the proper medium is doubtless rather difficult; how to encourage useful learning, religion, and morality, since these have been joined, without giving to their teachers any dangerous power or influence: they must have some, and will acquire more: How prevent their making any improper use of it? Permitting them to acquire, personally, a censorial power and influence, and prevent their employing any of it politically, or as a body, are real difficulties:

in

in the surmounting of these, however, you have made considerable progress, and it is to be hoped you may still go farther. A general and perfect toleration must be the point towards which you should gradually move. I can never see any sufficient reasons, why your church government might not safely admit of much greater latitude to the officiating clergy in forms and opinions; nor can I perceive why any speculative opinions should disqualify a man for any office that he is willing and able to fill. He should rather be encouraged to try: official practice and duties would gradually wear off the noxious edge of the most inimical speculations. It is high time to hazard a trial. Unless you enlarge the pale of church and state, how are all your outcast sheep ever to come in? or how is a reconciliation to be expected? I see nothing to fear, but much to hope, from the hypocrisy of conformity: but of that conformity, first make the steps few and easy, and not dishonourable. You have got so far as to preach up toleration, but you fail in the practice: your professed principles, and their numerous



rous exceptions, destroy each other. In the same breath with which you teach religious liberty, you abhor and anathematise the other sects of christians. Your church cannot judge in its own cause, and I am sorry to see the state judge so little better. Even your wise and temperate divines, of whom you have many, when they come to particulars, and to the practice, are scarcely proof against the bugbear dangers of opposite and seemingly hurtful principles; though the practice and history of the world, and even of their own religion, have shewn us that the lion and the lamb may, by habit, be brought to live together. Our reformation has, doubtless, had the merit of restoring to Christianity much of her original mild and humane temper; and you are happily not now so sensible as we are here, of the mischiefs of superabundant zeal, and religious antipathies.

In most subjects, but more especially in the speculative and uncertain, men must differ in opinion, and a variety, rather than uniformity in religious sentiments, seems

to have been the intention of the Author of nature. Religion seems necessary to most men, and each is entitled to that of his own choice. The utility is obvious of some moral teachers, and perhaps they should be paid at least in part by the state; but of this I am doubtful. It might be well if the pay and reward of every profession could be made to depend chiefly on their own merits, and diligence towards those they serve. I am told that some of our governments in America might serve the world as patterns in this, that they succeed much better for having no state religion or establishment, and that the people are found to be quite competent to the management of all that business for themselves.

You will perceive, that in giving you my doubts and opinions on these controverted subjects, I speak politically, and as a layman. Some of our scientific friends, who have likewise seen and studied the world in different countries, may be able to reconcile those and other politico-religious

gious difficulties, which, to me, appear to have become so complicated with our governments as to require the political and prudential wisdom of ages yet to come, in order to arrange, simplify, and settle them as they ought to be. Nor can I pretend to decide on the proportion of good or harm that has been done by ecclesiastical establishments in general, though I think it is evident enough here, that the balance is on the side of the latter; and that such institutions have been much more liable to abuses than productive of benefits, in this, and several other countries. It is truly astonishing, and will be still more so to an enlightened posterity, how such nations as these, which are scarcely able to support themselves, should maintain in affluence a set of men, only to mislead, to tyrannize over, and devour them.

In this manner was I writing to you, when I received yours almost on the same subjects. Your account of those strange fanatical riots in your capital, did not surprise me so much as you may imagine. I

should expect such things to happen oftener in some part or other of the country. I have frequently mentioned, that the spirit of fanaticism still exists among the people almost every where, and that it is not sufficiently known or understood by the superior ranks of men. We ought to be thankful that religious wars have ceased so long, and that a little time is given to reason to recover herself. If reason could acquire zeal and energy enough to make the most of the occasion, something might perhaps be established to keep fanaticism quiet till she lose or change her name and temper. I agree with you, that a perfect toleration would be the best remedy; but where is it to be found? unless it be in North America. Till the civil and religious constitution of your governments can be formed on principles of mental freedom, there cannot be much security of peace. While we depend on the accidental balance of sects and parties, which is so subject to gradual changes, religious war is not banished; she only remains quiet till employed by some powerful hypocrite or enthusiast. And if  
you.



you wait till then, Protestantism may prove the weakest side. Reformers, after their first fervours, must probably continue to grow more lukewarm, and divided among themselves; the philosophic apathy of their liberal and learned members is but ill-suited to cope with the zeal and assiduity, the unity and enmity, of their opponents. I fear we cannot soon hope for a complete toleration, nor expect the church voluntarily to grant places and power to their enemies, which they probably are, while treated as such.

However, toleration being the only remedy, and hence the object to be kept in view, let us not lose sight of it: and it must be pursued with that philosophic temper which is fit for legislation, though not for fighting. We must often accept of partial benefits, and should not refuse a part because we cannot have the whole, nor reject laws for being only partially liberal and wise. Though we cannot arrive at perfection, let us not neglect the steps of approximation within our power. Such is



the condition of human affairs: we must work with the tools, and with mankind, as we find them, and build our systems on the habits and principles already established, with a view only to gradual improvement. We must not quarrel with the human race, and give them up in despair, because we see them so often employed in establishing false principles, and then labouring to avert and correct their consequences, by which the utmost exertion of human wisdom is wasted in patching and mending its own errors. We see many abuses in society that must be left to grow big enough for a remedy, and become of a certain magnitude to deserve a law which, like all other remedies in nature, is itself an evil; and we must wait till the remedy becomes the lesser evil before it is applied. By watching and managing occasions, more concessions may be gradually obtained in favour of the natural freedom of opinion; taking care neither to awaken those inclined to sleep within the established church, nor alarm the watchful bigots without.

Tolera-

Toleration, though not yet completely attainable where there is a state religion, would however be found so advantageous to all, that it might probably keep its ground if once admitted. It is perhaps for its excellence that this remedy is so hated and dreaded by the Romish church. But neither toleration, nor protestantism, can be safe while any of the monastic or inquisitorial spirit remains in Europe. In that spirit you may still see your most powerful enemy. Monachism and protestantism, like fire and water, cannot long exist together in this great European republic, and still less in the same nation. In that natural war, which must ever secretly subsist between them, the former must probably conquer at last, if not gradually extirpated in due time, and while it can be done with temper and moderation. It still possesses all the advantages of a regular standing army, over an irregular and unconnected militia.

It is the variety of opinions, so wisely ordered by nature, that now saves men

from the persecutions of each other. The most singular opinions have been individually propagated without inconvenience to the public. Common ties and duties guide men while in society; it is only when they leave it, and become members of other communities, that their opinions can have any influence that concerns the state. The spirit and effects of all possible corporate bodies of men, separated from the rest of the nation, have not yet, I think, been sufficiently studied. The object, degrees, and terms of such separation, are known to be of importance, but they have not yet been well measured and estimated. Separate bodies, or associations, can only be admissible on condition of their injuring neither the public, nor any individual. The Romish church, and her incorporate bodies of monastic orders, have far transgressed those essential conditions. And those armies of veterans, so wonderfully formed and united on the most unnatural objects and principles, with the Pope at their head, have proved the most formidable enemy that ever was raised against reason,

reason, liberty, and nature; by them the Popish system has been well supported, and may possibly yet be restored. If that system could have been completely established on its professed principles, considering only a future state, and not this life, as worthy of our care and attention, it must have been immovable, or have put an end to society, or the human race, of which there was indeed once some appearance of danger, during the first fervours of that seclusive monastic mania. Though monasteries became afterwards of some use, and served at times as asylums against oppression, or as repositories of declining knowledge and industry; but when their utility ceased, they became a burden to society, or worse, and ought long ago to have been abolished, if the rapacity of princes and governments could be trusted with the disposal of their property for the public good. Fortunately their absurd principles, though so artfully propagated as to succeed beyond belief, had however to labour so much against human nature, that she at length proved too strong for them: but in the contest, she has not

come



come off without injury, loss of time, and force. The human character, so long in the shackles of superstition, may never again be able to walk well without them, nor recover her natural power and energy. The secular Romish clergy, with similar principles, nevertheless maintain a character and conduct far less bigotted and pernicious, which is probably owing to their remaining officially more mixed with men, living and acting with us in the duties and occupations of life which, in that situation, become more powerful than the unnatural principles and speculations of their profession. If the Pope can ever be compelled to relieve them from celibacy, dispense with the monastic vows, and abolish the regular orders, the dangers to liberty and improvement will be over, but not till then. Good policy may now join with philosophy to encourage you to single out, and declare war against most of the monastic orders; and you may soon get others (even Catholic) states to join secretly in such measures. This is no longer one of those popular torrents that would overflow and increase



crease by opposing it in front. Only the Pope, and a few adherents of small weight and importance, continue to support the monks: nay, they are rather generally detested by a large majority of most ranks, except some of the lowest, and regarded with a jealous dislike even by the secular clergy of their own church. All these would secretly rejoice at their dissolution, and at every thing that might tend to disappoint their views and credit, which depend much on their foreign missions: there, they are singularly laborious and indefatigable, and are not to be diverted from their purpose by any social or human feelings; these are all superseded and lost in the habits and discipline of their order: not like *Turgot*, who said lately to his king, that he was a man before he was an *intendant*: but these men seem to have been born friars, and to have taken the spirit of their order from their mother's womb. The number concealed in England is always considerable, and still more and more openly in Ireland, where they labour with success, and contribute largely towards preventing

the progress of reformation, of knowledge, and industry. It might be good policy for government to furnish the people there with priests educated at home, to prevent their being supplied with those regular bigots from abroad. From every state of freedom should such institutions, with all their members, be excluded. All the sects, indeed, whose principles admit not of mutual toleration, should be forced to it as a first condition of their being tolerated themselves. A just government would not only refrain from dictating any speculative opinions to its subjects, but would prevent its being done by others. Men should be protected from the tyranny of their own sect, and all the sects from each other. Under this head might be comprehended all that the state has to do with religion. The great object of the monastic orders is now the recovery of the lost sheep, and converting the nations who have strayed from the flock. In some of these, unless wiser precautions are used, it may require only a few steps farther towards a certain degree of corruption and decline, and hence a licentious depravity

pravity in the lower ranks, so as to bring on a disposition towards despotism, the general but ineffectual remedy of vice and ignorance. Then priests and friars come in as necessary instruments in a defective government, and may finish the reduction of the world again to superstition and barbarism, from whence so little of it is yet long or far emerged. Those bigots are much more assiduous and insinuating, than the liberal and learned, in acquiring a share in the direction of princes, or of those about them, and in procuring some sort of circuitous secret influence in courts. Indeed these two powers are easily brought into alliance, and to draw together. Tyranny willingly enough employs superstition to subdue, to bind, and deliver up the people to him, while she as readily accepts the employment, and receives with both hands; from her employer for sucking the brains and the blood of the people, and from those very people whom she misleads and devours.

Where the state assumes or delegates the task of defining or holding up to the people  
any

any set of speculative opinions, in preference to all others, and either forces or bribes them into it; all other sects are thus deprived of the same privilege and protection, and many of your best subjects are thence excluded from serving their country, and from being interested in the duration and prosperity of its present government. The church and state set a bad example, whatever they may preach. But a church, or a state, is an indolent unfeeling kind of supposititious being: liberal laws and connections must be squeezed out of them by some sort of necessity. Their situation, policy, or interest; the absurdities and persecutions of their enemies, as well as their own professed tenets and principles, have all, at times, contributed to force them into certain degrees of toleration, which is not, I fear, very natural to any state religion since that of ancient Rome. By repeated and well-timed endeavours you may, by degrees, get freed from subscriptions to certain articles and creeds, and perhaps, at length, admit of all your subjects to serve the public in any department.

You



You might begin by trying if all your numerous laws about religion could not be methodized and reduced. There may be no occasion to proscribe any individual opinions, but only to prescribe the terms and limits of religious associations, in which you would in effect exclude all the monastic orders, and inquisitorial principles.

Some foreign philosophers have told me, they rejoice to see that we do not, in England, endeavour to make our people too devout, *trop devots*, for that even Protestant devotees are only prepared proselytes for some friar or enthusiast. The Roman Catholic doctrine has many advantages in the gaining of converts, being better and more artfully suited to the timid and indolent nature of man, than that of Luther or Calvin, which require some exertion of mind. Were education nearly what it ought to be in England, you might trust, and exercise the good sense of the nation, with such adversaries as Romish monks, and any devotees, individually, though never *en corps*; but in your present state,  
you



you are no match for them. I believe nothing but a right education, consisting chiefly of useful science, discipline, and industry, which produces a certain silent veneration for the source of all beneficial religion, and a respectful indifference about sectarial distinctions, can save you all from falling back into the lap of holy catholic church some time or other.

We might observe, if not too systematic, that the unbelieving philosopher, and the zealous bigot, may be considered as the extremes between which may be arranged all the different sectaries and opinions, with truth and wisdom perhaps towards the center. The extremes may be the farthest wrong; but there is room for all, individually. It is only the corps, and terms of association, that concern the public. If the inquisitorial and temporal powers and property of the church should continue to decline, till annihilated by wisdom, science, and good government; and we all go on improving in arts, industry, and useful knowledge, the monastic orders will probably

bably in time be abolished throughout most of Europe; but humanity hopes it may be done with more justice and liberality than was practised with the Templers and the Jesuits. That prince, or government, will gain an eternal name, and do infinite service to the world, who shall first abolish those orders on the true and liberal principles of policy; by stopping the reception, permitting the present race of monks to die off, and appropriating their estates inviolably to public education \*.

\* The observations contained in the following note, were communicated by a clerical friend on reading the above.

“ I confess, I am one of those who think that the multiplication of creeds, and the establishment of systematical confessions of faith, have been of no great service to the cause of pure and undefiled religion.” Dogmatical decisions upon speculative and controverted points are very consistent with the genius of the church of Rome, but can never be vindicated in a Protestant church upon the grand principles of the Reformation, namely, that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the only rule of faith and manners, and that in them every Christian is bound to search for those truths which are necessary to his salvation.

I cannot conceive therefore, that the foundation of the Protestant church of England would be in the least de-

gree weakened by removing those systematic confessions within which she hath intrenched herself; and if those who are called to serve at the altar, instead of being made to subscribe to formularies of human composition, were only required to assent to the questions put in our offices of ordination; it appears to me, that the church would have as good security as any Protestant communion can reasonably demand for the proper discharge of the important duties of the pastoral care. If holy scripture, as our church maintains, in her sixth article, containeth all things necessary to salvation, can it be supposed that human articles and creeds are necessary to enable the Gospel to maintain its ground in the world? No. The church of Christ, we have our Saviour's word for it, is founded upon a rock, which all the powers of darkness shall never be able to overthrow, and his religion will always find its way into the hearts of the well-disposed, without requiring any assistance from the arbitrary decrees of synods, consistories, and convocations. The articles and creeds of the church of England were designed to prevent diversity of opinion in matters of religion, an attempt both absurd and impracticable, as experience hath fully evinced; for is it not well known that Calvinists and Arminians, Trinitarians and Arians, officiate in the established church? and while men of such discordant principles continue to enter promiscuously into the church, can any reasonable plea be adduced either for the expediency or utility of continuing the present mode of subscription? For, to use the words of the great Erasmus, as bonds, deeds, covenants, obligations, indentures, expressed in a multitude of words, afford matter for law-suits; so, in religion, a profusion of determinations, decrees, and decisions, begets endless controversies. Any question concerning Christ's knowing or foreseeing the bad uses that might be made of his religion, I think ought by no means.

to be printed. He undoubtedly foreknew all the uses that would be made of it. All power is committed to him : the world is under his government, and the abuses which he has permitted to be made of his doctrine have been working to some good end, and they will all, in due time, give way to the establishment of that period of righteousness, in which the pure banner of the Gospel shall rise triumphant on the ruins of every corrupt system that human vanity and craft have devised.

## L E T T E R   V.

*Appearance of the Country. People. Braga. Oporto. Brazils. Wine Trade. Lower Classes.*

**I**N these northern provinces of Portugal are found the most industrious people, as well as the pleasanter country. The export of their linens to the Brazils is yearly increasing, without any particular encouragement, or any great manufactory being established. The junction of domestic arts and trades in villages, manufacture with agriculture, is highly advantageous to a country, and has generally succeeded whenever it has been attempted, as in England, Silesia, Switzerland. The country is nobly varied into mountains, hills, vales, and woods, all on these beautiful rivers, the Minho, Lima, and Douro, and others that feed them. The vineyards, trees, and white houses, mix well with the rocks and rivers: but I decline  
descrip-



descriptions. These rivers are embarrassed with increasing bars at their mouths, which might have been removed by art and industry, and which an increasing commerce would soon have repaid with interest. There is no public concern that requires a more constant national attention than sea-ports. In these, and in good roads, consists the chief foundation of the superiority of civilized and cultivated nations, over the barbarous and ignorant, or oppressed. The larger plains of Braga and Guimaraens are richly planted, watered, and cultivated. In descending from the surrounding mountains, the rich fields, the vineyards, and luxuriant produce, furnish the most grateful scenes and prospects. The finest fruit-trees festooned with vines, as in Italy. But we are disappointed to find, amidst such apparent plenty, the miserable state of animal life, and so disproportioned to the vegetable: men, children, cattle, in so starving a condition. I believe this is too often the case throughout the world; in the finest countries the most miserable people. The causes of it may be various.

Necessity is the mother of all exertion; nothing less can move us. Nature, by furnishing the wants of men too easily, curtails their powers. Canes, reeds, gourds, the palm and the cocoa tree, help to produce and perpetuate indolence and stupidity. The cold climate, and the rocky mountains, often force industry. But in most old nations, where oppression has generally been progressive, the state, the church, and the landlord, at length take all the produce and profit from those who labour, except the barely necessary: that, being in England two or three times more than it is here, must be left to the cultivator: so that some degree of luxury, expence, and good living among the people, becomes a public good. I think the cattle of poor people are almost every where alike, and nearly of the same poor ragged kind: a variety of improved breeds of cattle can only be found in a country of rich farmers.

*Braga* is a fine open country town. The clergy, all-powerful here too, as at St. Jago.  
 Their

Their *Bon Jesus*, or Mount Calvary, is a great work, consisting of roads, stairs, chapels, up through a pleasant ascent of a woody mountain. It must have been attended with great labour and expence. Where despotism has left no other power but the church that is capable of great works, the public is obliged to her when she chuses to employ a numerous poor, though in useless labour: and still more, when she employs them in works of taste.

*Oporto* has been much improved and beautified by its present governor Don Juan d'Almada, with the assistance and advice of our good consul. But one man cannot do much for his country where there is so little public spirit, and more of that spirit cannot perhaps be expected under such a government: nor can the arts and trades necessary to great public works, be found in such a country. They know not how to estimate their own strength here more than in Spain. They have begun an immense building for an hospital, which cannot probably be finished in less

than an hundred years; and perhaps never. They had the plan from our judicious Car; but the paper is now nearly rotten, and in pieces, and none of them can copy any part of it, nor can they go on without it, and hardly indeed with it. Unless science, taste, and security, accompany the introduction of riches, they cannot have half their natural effects, nor appear in public or private works and improvements: but here the appearance of the adjacent country forms almost an exception to this rule. The taste of the English merchants for country houses and gardens has considerably prevailed, in spite of bad tenures, workmen, &c. And the green woods, speckled with white houses, accord with the rocky scenery in furnishing out many beautiful landscapes. But other works loudly demanded more of their public attention. Half their liberalities to churches, convents, and hospitals, would have removed the bar of their river and improved its navigation, and might, by this time, have doubled their commerce and industry.

The



The trade and prosperity of the Brazils might be carried almost to any imaginable extent by a free and wise government. They now send there, from hence, from twenty to thirty ships a-year, which return worth about 10,000 *l.* each, chiefly in sugars. By my best accounts, that country is capable of every kind of produce and improvement, to a degree beyond what has been generally conceived. The late minister did not overlook so great an object: there, he attempted a great deal, as usual, some of which succeeded: he tried to regulate and legislate for that great colony, and to liberate the people from the oppression of viceroys, &c. but the distance, the corruption, and decline, are too great for such trivial modes of reformation. Probably nothing less than a free government, such as that of some of our colonies, and a total separation from Portugal, could give to the Brazils the prosperity of which it is capable: and if we could at the same time bring this, the mother-country, up to a government something like ours; such seem to be the only ways left to preserve the

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the two countries from annihilation, under the dead weight of the Spanish monarchy.

Their wine trade here has long been in a prosperous increasing way, from the time of our Queen Anne, or perhaps earlier, when other wines of this coast, as those of Viana and Galicia, were in fashion; these might be improved, and again come to be liked; our taste is changeable. About thirty thousand pipes, they say, are exported here annually to England, at about 15*l.* a pipe—half a million: it costs you, that drink it, at least a million, and you probably pay as much more for other wines and spirits; so that we English swallow above two millions in foreign drink. A great joint stock and privileged company is established here, originally by Pombal; so little did he know of commerce. They might soon, if favoured by an ignorant government, engross all the wine trade of the country: which indeed they might have done ere now, if the zeal and activity of individuals did not enable them to support some competition even with great companies.

If this company undertake the woollen fabrics, as talked of, they may soon be ruined. They may become creditors to a government which can give them no security: though it may pay them with some grant or privilege to cheat or oppress the people, it will afterwards squeeze them as a sponge. They had better go on, contending with the English merchants, a competition which is of service to all parties. Though a spirit of monopoly is perhaps inherent in trade, and particularly in companies, a wise government will be watchful to counteract it, and preserve a fair competition. A great company would probably soon ruin any country, if it could be as active and assiduous as an individual: but happily their powers are generally disproportioned to their disposition; and great combinations or confederacies are luckily subject to more failures and defects than single persons, which help to diminish the dread and danger to the rest of mankind.

Whatever concerns the lower and most numerous classes of men should be the most interest-

interesting to us. The general police of a country, its merits and defects, are objects of importance to travellers: but I do not mean to trouble you with particulars which cannot interest you much at that distance. Our poor fishermen here are taxed above 70 *per cent.* of what they produce or catch, and yet they are numerous, though very poor and ragged, or rather naked. The poverty of the people, and hence their indifference about the comforts of life, are evils of extensive influence on the improvements of a nation. Where the lower classes are so easily supplied and satisfied, nobody cares much about their comforts or conveniencies. Hence the hospitals, prisons, barracks, inns, &c. are so badly supplied, and cruelly neglected: and though the people who inhabit those places should be supposed as easy and contented as those of other countries in similar situations, it can only be because they are habituated to poverty, dirt, and ill treatment, which renders them so much the meaner, weaker, and more useless beings. Some philosophers who fancy that the rich  
nations

nations are the most corrupted and weakened, and the poorer the most virtuous and vigorous, take their notions from books, and not from observation and experience. But in searching for the source of all this, we shall again find it in the nature of the government. In some of the ancient republics, poverty with freedom and self-importance, produced the best effects on the human character; here, poverty with oppression produces the worst.



## L E T T E R VI.

*Lisbon. Marquis de Pombal. Sovereigns  
and Government. Character, &c.*

**L**ISBON.—Here, even more than in other great towns, the benevolent mind is wounded on viewing the mixture of luxury and misery, the distressing extremes of poverty and affluence, in a thousand ways. The melancholy history of its destruction by the earthquake in 1755 is well known. It is still rebuilding on a plan of the Marquis de Pombal's, which, though noble and magnificent, is rather gigantic, and barbarously great too, *à l'Espagnole*. This town was always remarkable, I believe, for being at once sumptuous and nasty, and will probably be so still. The smell of the tide, at low water, is very disagreeable in all the lower parts, as well as that of every house you enter. Common sewers, cleanliness, internal



ternal conveniencies, have all been too much sacrificed to external appearance, which, after all, is in a bad style of architecture; immense ranges of building without parts, ill proportioned and divided: it is obvious, that nothing but the outside drawings of the elevations have been previously considered, and that the art and artist have been controlled by the ignorance of power. We may form opinions of a nation from their taste in the arts, and style of their public buildings. Sacrificing too much to appearances, to graces and ornaments, may be the vice of the age. Wisdom said, let the useful be ornamented; but Folly reversed the order of the sentence, and substituted the accessory for the principal. Where you see trivial things crowded with ornaments, and without sufficient spaces of relief or repose for the eye, from the extremes of confusion, or of uniformity; from the lofty domes or ranges of columns, where nothing of importance is either to be covered or supported, you may deduce the imbecility of the artist, and partly of the nation where he could be employed

employed in preference. The minister had certainly great merit in getting the city rebuilt at all; and there is a grandeur and sublimity, though a want of taste and science, in his idea: but we should have expected a real great man to have encouraged the artists, foreign and native, by promoting a competition for the best plan, instead of enforcing his own. We find him, like many other great men, not exempt from the weakness of fancying he knew every thing better than any body else; he had the misfortune of being beyond control. No man chose to presume to understand even his own trade equally with him. This noble situation certainly deserved the best plan possible. Nature seems to have marked out this site, and this city, for the capital of the peninsula; and if the Philips had moved their court thither, their posterity might now have been in possession of the whole.

The Marquis de Pombal was certainly a great and bold reformer, and at two or three critical periods was of signal service:

to his country. His intrepid and active spirit raised his nation from indolent and supine insignificance, to a degree of exertion, and to a station in the general scale, long unknown to them, and to which it might easily have been kept up, if managed only with common attention and abilities, by pursuing the maxims of which he had already surmounted the difficulties of establishing. But they already sink in the scale, and must probably decline still farther. I wish you to look yet higher for a real great man—for a legislator. The genius and the knowledge of this minister did not go far enough beyond mediocrity in the great leading principles and objects of the first importance to a nation; nor could he establish a free and permanent constitution in the state, which is the only effort of wisdom and virtue that can entitle a man to the character of a lawgiver, or that can secure an eternal name and a lasting nation. You see how few of the numerous regulations of our modern reformers can outlive them. However, this minister, by an union, rather uncommon,

of boldness and artifice, by a knowledge of men, and of England \*, he effected some great and many difficult things. He undertook and completed certain kinds of enterprize and reformation which were then thought impossible, as on occasion of the war with Spain, of the earthquake, the conspiracy, in commerce, colonies, colleges, church, nobility, &c. the history of all which is tolerably known. Though we may doubt his understanding all the minutiae of every business into which he chose to enter, and had the ambition to lead, it is plain that he knew men, and particularly his countrymen, whom he could either *lead* or *drive*; and we are therefore surprised to find him often preferring the latter mode, and cannot believe that so many examples of inhuman cruelty were necessary for any good political purpose; nor can we conceive that the national character required such severity. Though some of the Portuguese may, at

\* He confesses freely, that he learned what he knows of politics, in England, and chiefly from Sir Robert Wal-



times, be cruel and vindictive, when hurried away by their keen and temporary passions; yet they soon cool and repent. The too frequent instances of private revenge may be more owing to the state of laws and society, than to any thing in their native character or temper of mind, which, though hot and violent, is, I think, naturally generous, affable, forgiving. They might be ruled by the sceptre of equity easier and better than by the rod of iron.

We may likewise regret in this minister, that some of his public schemes had too often a retrospect to his own little private or family interests. For example, we understand, that he adopted the absurd French idea of forcing the people to root up their vines to sow the land with corn. The law being found too severe, exceptions and indulgences were granted: and on the whole, his own estates were made to profit the most by those changes. We should not be disappointed at not finding in the most perfect human character, a constant series



of the disinterested efforts of virtue ; but a real great mind, in the pursuit of important objects, must be above pecuniary interests. More benevolence and magnanimity, with deeper science and greater views, joined to his boldness and decision, would have made him a great legislator, and a reformer of extensive and lasting utility. He probably thought himself eminent as a legislator, as an architect, a general, a merchant, &c. ; but his greatness in all these capacities begins already to appear at least doubtful, though he must ever be allowed signal merit as a secretary of state. Like most modern reformers, he was not probably aware, that in order to produce the total change which he wanted, and establish his reform on a fixed and lasting basis, the existing principles and form of the whole political machine required a total though gradual renovation, which could not be effected by putting his hand to particular parts, where the motion must cease when the hand is withdrawn. He doubtless corrected many abuses, and many of his laws were good, if they could have lasted. Since his  
regula-

regulations for the admission of monks, and his limiting their number, the commons and waste lands have been observed to diminish. The sons of the country people, deprived of that resource of idleness and superstition, have been obliged to attempt farming and other industrious ways of life; but that happy progress is already at a stand; the gates of holy church are again open for reception. We hear, that during the first year after the late king's death, and the retreat of his minister, the bishop of Braga alone has admitted 7000 into holy orders. The benefits resulting from his destruction of the order of Jesuits I consider as doubtful. It was destroying their best schools before they had any others to supply their place; nor are they likely soon to find any: and it is possible, that Catholic Europe may thence decline instead of advancing in knowledge and scientific improvements. If monachism were admissible in any society, that order might perhaps have been reformed to advantage, and rendered more useful, without a total abolition. Besides, they were,

like your opposition, always some check upon regal power, though not always from the virtuous motives of public good. But for that reason has the jealousy of monarchs been awakened, and contributed the most to their downfall. Their greatest merit was probably that of promoting and improving education, which they might have been made to improve still farther. Some of their schools may deserve to be examined and imitated before they are quite extinct and forgotten.

The Marquis's school 'of commerce here was certainly a good idea, and highly proper in a country from whence the true principles of trade had so long been banished; but he might have succeeded better had he attempted less, which may frequently be observed of reformers, when they descend to minutiae. A great man establishes general laws and principles, and leaves to their gradual influence, and to time, the bringing up of many lesser objects. His plan of reformation in the university of Coimbra was likewise good, but

but the particulars again too voluminous; the spirit and the merits of his system, all enveloped and regulated away in huge volumes of monastic minutiae. However, several good foreign professors had been collected; but some of the natives having caught a little too much of contagious science and freedom, were soon sent to the Inquisition, and the foreigners have departed. Most of his other institutions, manufactories, &c. have shared the same fate, or will soon follow. His regulations respecting the church and the nobility seem too often dictated by a kind of cruel hatred to them, more than by a regard to the public weal. He might, with a better grace, have reduced their power and insolence, if not so obviously tending to increase his own. Among his various reforms, it is rather surprising he did not abolish the Inquisition; but he has chosen to retain it for the malignant purpose of employing it as a state, or rather a ministerial, engine.



Anxious and ardent minds, intent on their object, are apt to overlook many things that lie in the path which leads to it; and they forget that the path is life itself, and may be too short to reach the point in view. This minister's complicated and disjointed fabric, built on a basis insecure, and surrounded with enemies, he might easily have foreseen could not long subsist after his administration. Several essential parts in the system of national prosperity he overlooked or misunderstood, as well as the firm and constitutional mode of fixing them on interests of sufficient support: such as roads, posts, finance, agriculture, and above all, a legislature; in these, his ideas seem to have been neither sufficiently enlarged nor modernized. Commerce remains still overwhelmed with ill-judged duties and regulations: internal taxation not better. For example, the additional tenth laid during their last war, and still continued, is probably more prejudicial than another of six times the amount, if more equally distributed. This, being levied only on lands and houses that  
are



are rented, tends to discourage farming and farmers, who are always the chief improvers of a country. I leave you to enquire into the farther particulars of their taxation and finance when necessary. The mystery with which the operations and amount of their revenue are here concealed, may be considered among the symptoms and foolish arcana of despotism. The amount, I understand, is subject to considerable fluctuation and uncertainty, as well as many other things in this country. There can be no security, nor stability, where the supreme power is so subject to change its principles with every change of circumstances, of persons or events. The longest life of one man, though the best of kings or ministers, will never prove a sufficient dependence for the people, to give them time or courage to improve in matters of any great national importance. In short, the state reformer, who does not establish a balanced and a lasting constitution, does nothing. The legislative spirit is not yet revived in the world, though we may hope to see causes arising at a distance  
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that may awaken it. In an age of science, experiment, and enterprise, it is rather surprising there have been so few state reformers in modern Europe. Schemers of every class form an useful race of men, and are not yet considered as they deserve. The bold political innovator is probably as necessary a character as any other, for the improvement of the world. He leads us beyond the bounds of habit and custom, a necessary step to future advances; and though he may sometimes lead us wrong, it is perhaps better to go wrong sometimes than stand still too long. This man once promised to be one of these: the causes of his failure may furnish lessons of importance. We may be excused for thus canvassing the conduct of ministers; or if, to answer the purposes of useful knowledge, we judge, like many good writers, a little hastily of men and measures, with the secrets and difficulties of which we are not sufficiently acquainted; they are however fair game to pursue for our instruction, though they may deserve more excuse

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and confideration for their fupposed errors than they generally meet with.

The only public entertainments now in this fine capital confift of religious ceremonies and proceffions, which are attended by the royal family with exemplary devotion. We learn that thefe good fovereigns have determined not to take away any lives, even of the greateft criminals, during their reign, and that they will rather abandon the throne than go to war. This has fo uncommon a fhare of the milk of humanity and religion as to command our refpect and beft wifhes, though we know too well that fuch a fyftem will not fucceed; and we can only regret that mankind are not yet to be governed by fuch maxims. However, if it muft be a weak government, theirs is at leaft an amiable weaknefs. This might ferve as an important experiment, if the wifdom and equity of all the other parts and operations of government could be made to correfpond; if the neceffary changes in religion, education, legiflation, could follow; if the mo-

tives of shame, of emulation, of freedom, and self-importance; of rewards proportioned to milder and more certain punishments, could be instituted: but a part of a system cannot stand alone, nor produce the effects of the whole.

In some things, these people have kept still farther behind the rest of Europe than Spain. Many of their moral ideas, their notions of honour, revenge, fidelity, of love and marriage, you will find very different from ours. It appears in history, that they were not formerly so very different from the rest of Europe, and that they had, in the days of chivalry, some as gallant knights as any of the other nations, and many eminent officers at the time of their conquests and discoveries: and we are at a loss to account for the base modes of private revenge here, taking place of the more generous method of duelling, which, though still barbarous, has long been general, and perhaps not quite unnecessary nor useless in Europe. Some of the causes of these and other differences might be traced to  
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the power of their church and the badness of their government; the one being yet more powerful, ignorant, and superstitious, and the other more despotic and defective, than even those of Spain. The first establishment and subsequent revolution of this nation were, like themselves, rash and improvident, the plans hasty and incomplete; no system of constitution like those of contemporary nations was established. Hence came in the church to govern in almost every thing essential to society, and thence may be deduced many of those differences and deficiencies in their manners and moral ideas, their false notions of honour, revenge; of sins, virtues, merits, &c.

Their people of rank are extremely pleasing and affable, though somewhat formal and affected, like the old French, whom they resemble in many ways, as in taste of building, of dress, in levity of manner and character, in grimace and affectation, and even in their taste of pronunciation, and in that of singing; their national songs being generally some heavy lamentation in the  
 lesser



lesser third, though sometimes in a style of the pathetic and expressive, far beyond any of the French, or indeed any other national melodies we know of: and as to music in general, they have greatly improved on their original, and have now acquired so ardent a love for the Italian music and language, and a taste so highly delicate and refined, as surpasses all other nations except Italy itself; and probably no other country could have formed a Perez and an Avondano, nor have esteemed them as they deserve. A character of such high sensibility, a disposition so kind and courteous, so feeling and amiable, must perhaps be proportionally weak and unmanly, especially under their present mode of education and government; yielding to every sensual temptation, and as readily disposed to repentance and contrition; modelled by, and proper subjects for, a priestly government; seldom capable of a degree of perseverance to be depended on; children who rarely arrive at the age of maturity. Yet such a character, susceptible of every impression, under a wise government,

vernment, if kept alert, and employed on proper objects, might be rendered as capable of virtue and exertion, as it is now subject to vice and weakness. My prepossession of considering them as an old French colony may be justified by their history. They conquered their country from the Moors, under princes of the house of Burgundy, who drew, and probably recruited, their forces from France. This, and their subsequent connections with that nation, may partly account for the resemblance.

There is something peculiarly affable and pleasing, tender and endearing, in the women of this country; in their manner, voice, and conversation, especially among the higher ranks. Their size is rather small, but their form frequently of an agreeable and elegant cast. But I do not mean to be particular concerning a people so well known to many of our countrymen. More lessons and observations might doubtless be gathered by a longer residence. The usual rapid mode of travelling affords too little time to see, and often too much to write.

## L E T T E R VII.

*Of Books. Of Man. Portugal. Of Societies. The World. Europe. Confederacies. Letters. War. Travelling, &c. in a variety of miscellaneous Reflections.*

To Mr. A. J.

I MEAN here to answer several of your last in one, and to give you a few more loose hints and reflections, such as I wish you to remember, chiefly from my common-place book. The revision of more notes of journies, some to Italy and other parts of the Mediterranean, must be left to another occasion; but the utility must become more evident before it is undertaken. You have more writings already published, concerning those, and the other civilized parts of the world, than you can well digest. I know not yet where you can  
find

find any good accounts of the Portuguese authors, unless it be in Antoni, who includes those of Portugal with the Spanish, I believe, as far as he goes; and we hope the same method will be pursued by the academicians at Madrid, who are publishing a new edition of this work, and that they will bring it farther down \*. Portugal, you will find, has also had her period of learning, and some good writers for their age, chiefly during her days of prosperity, of her distant discoveries and conquests. Arms, arts, letters, you see, generally flourish and decline together. They had scientific writers the first, and very soon after or almost cotemporary with those of Italy; as Nunhez, or Nonius, to whom we owe the present excellent method of dividing our quadrants. He published in 1537.

Such are the books, after all, probably of the most utility to man; those of arts

\* See accounts of Portuguese authors, in a work entitled, *Summario da Bibliotheca Lusitana*, 4 vols. Lisboa, 1786.



and sciences. In considering the immensity of other publications, I am often led to doubt whether their utility may not diminish with their number, till at last the speculative and learned will write only for each other; while those who have other business to mind will despair, at the sight of our immense increasing libraries, of any information that way, and the bulk of mankind remain still more ignorant and indifferent of what passes among the learned. The voluminous comments of the last ages, and the trifling chit-chat style of this, may so fill the world with volumes as to frighten our idle sons from reading any of them. But let us hope that time will purge away the dross and leave only the useful, and that our numerous works may be of more service to posterity than to us, when the essence comes to be extracted and brought together. Hence good epitomes of past knowledge become the most useful publications, as it is only by such means that science can be diffused, and have beneficial influence on a whole nation.



I approve much of your reading Montefquieu, A. Ferguson, A. Smith, Hume, and Blackstone. As I would have you think as well as read, I should prefer the book that is the ofteneft turned down on the table, to take a turn round the room, and that makes you dwell and feaft upon thinking. Take enlarged views of man, of the whole fpecies, as well as of nations, claffes, and individuals; contemplate human nature and fociety in the declining, and in the advancing ftate. When we confider the active principles in our nature, it is difficult to conceive how the human race can well become retrograde. Surely nothing lefs than the united efforts of tyranny and fuperftition, of paffion and ignorance, could deprive them of their natural habits of purfuing their own intereft, and hence, when well underftood, that of the fociety and of the fpecies. However, this is not rare, but frequent in the hiftory of mankind: their natural induftry is often fo checked and ftifled that the national ftock diminishes, and the fociety declines: we fee it in thefe two nations every ftap we take.

Portugal, I am sometimes inclined to believe, recoverable, if its inhabitants, or rather government, could only be wise enough to preserve an intimate connection with England, and their enmity to Spain. Thence might proceed motives to useful exertion. By some wise minister, bred in England, they might in time obtain a free and fixed constitution of government, as the only means of duration and prosperity for this little nation and its colonies. Nothing else can give it strength to compensate the want of space.

But again, when we view human society on the other side, and contemplate the numerous causes of decline, as those of bad education; the predominance of the selfish principles over the benevolent; public abuses which by so many ways creep in and multiply each other; the difficulties of combining liberty with security, sufficient to awaken and support industry; and even where these are once established, we see arts and luxury, science, dependence, and slavery, grow up together, or the wisdom  
of

of ages destroyed by one foolish measure, or minister: the standard of virtue, to which all must in some degree conform, we see varying every age; at one time rigid and savage, at another refined and relaxing, as ignorance and superstition retire to make way for knowledge and vicious indulgence; and thence the gradual decline of all public spirit, which soon becomes insufficient to contend with the private views and efforts of a few, to whom the many are at last subdued, so as to banish again the spirit of labour and exertion; till by degrees the present civilized and cultivated countries become the prey of despotism and barbarous deserts once more, and thence new nations arise. So that we see the moral world is probably more subject to great, though gradual revolutions, than the natural. This circle must perhaps be often repeated, and the history of all be well preserved, before we can establish right principles on which stability and improvement at once depend.

Societies can never be formed by perfect wisdom. Colonies from cultivated nations may have some advantages; and we accordingly find those few, within the period of history, to have made the quickest and greatest progress; as the Asiatic Greeks, Carthage, the Roman colonies, North America. But as they must always retain some of their native vices, as well as improvements, they must therefore, perhaps, come sooner to decay. Some think that modern Europe may be already past her meridian, and now on the decline; and that our systems of government and religion are not capable of greater advances than what we have seen. Neighbouring nations gradually assimilate, though slowly; but whether towards the best or the worst among them, may yet be doubtful; whether those that rise, or those that decline draw the rest after them; whether he that subdues men by arms, artifice, or corruption, may not have more imitators than their greatest benefactors who render them industrious, free, and happy: One warlike despot must produce others,



as his neighbours must, for defence, imitate him in maintaining great and destructive armies; and these, in the manner they are commonly raised and constructed, generally tend to ruin their own nations as much as their enemies. It is certainly of importance to know on what the spirit of industry, of improvement, and duration, depends. If there be a principle of universal efficacy throughout the moral as well as physical world, it seems to be that of mutual control. It seems essential to the existence and duration of all political systems, and it would not be difficult to shew how all nature is supported by it.

Freedom and security being in some degree incompatible, as a part must be given up in order to secure the remainder, the secret seems to consist in knowing what, and how much that part should be. Hitherto we have probably been somewhat mistaken in both. Till the great art of government becomes simplified and arranged out of chaos and mystery, it will continue, like some other arts, to be administered often



by ignorant and designing empirics. We have certainly done more than all the other nations towards the discovering and laying open the *arcana* of this great art; and it is rather surprising that other legislators have not been more solicitous to make use of our practical discoveries. The wisdom and œconomy of a political principle, like those of nature, must be estimated on the number and merits of the different purposes it is calculated to answer. Some of those ascribed to our great Alfred, by their duration, and being still the best parts of our police, seem to have been dictated by the true legislative spirit. It may still be a problem here in Europe, however the case may be determined in China, whether the government of good laws, or good men, be the best? Though both may be necessary, and each want the assistance of the other, and the latter may be impossible alone; yet if either, and only one of them, were to be had, the latter would probably be the best government of the two, if it could be prevented from declining into despotism. As laws advance and multiply,

manners

manners have often been observed to decline. The best system would be that which produced the most wise and good men. There is a spirit composed of justice and humanity which comprehends almost all virtues, and which, if once generally attained, would supply the place of many laws; and men would then look for happiness from their own virtues, talents, and exertions; and not from fortune or dependence, nor from vice, intrigue, or artifice.

What a shame to the human race to see so small a part of our globe yet peopled and cultivated! so few of the people properly civilized and improved, and their small improvements confined to so few and far distant spots, separated by immense deserts, only parts of which are barely occupied by some wandering tribes of beings often scarcely human. Except China, some parts of India, and of Europe, the rest is yet a barren waste, rendered only the more gloomy by such scattered inhabitants, or by containing here and there a parcel of oppressed

oppressed people, the subjects of despotism. And even in the most improved parts of the world, perhaps, there is scarce a majority who have acquired wants enough to gain the proper habits of a continued industry; and above half the people would willingly remain deprived of most of what we should consider as the common necessities of life, rather than work for them. But even when men remain, or are reduced by oppression to the lowest state, to indolent, selfish, and malevolent beings, or to the character of slaves, they are rarely even then so bad as their superiors affect to consider them; and they might be more readily improved by gentle and confidential treatment, than by loads of penal laws, which only make them worse; or by multiplying their chains as they become less able to break or to bear them. To change the habits of a whole people can only be done by working on the rising generations; but that again is an art now little attempted or understood, and is generally left to chance, or to teachers whose views and interest may tend to keep them ignorant, or lead them astray.

astray. The vulgar, or common run of legislators, seem to think that the people can never be too much kept under. They must doubtless be regulated and controlled, but for their own benefit, that they may not by their excesses destroy their own weight and importance; an importance which we, in particular, must support, with all its inconveniencies, if we mean to avoid the fate of other nations. But then their power and influence must act always by intermediate instruments, by their legal agents. I know not how our government could be so awkward and imprudent as to provoke their late attempts to act by themselves, and in a political capacity, for which they are as totally unfit as they are qualified for certain civil and local functions.

Some of the nations of antiquity rose to vigour and eminence by the direct road of virtue, by encouraging the noblest and most manly dispositions. Perhaps there was no other way left for us selfish and degenerated moderns to emerge from  
 Gothic



Gothic barbarism, but by the avaricious spirit of commerce and gain. By this we have risen, and by its effects we must probably fall: for commerce and the arts have a tendency, without some wise regulations, gradually to corrupt, debilitate, and finally to enslave mankind; and we may already too plainly perceive, in some of the foremost nations, the footsteps of luxury and depravity, of tyranny and public abuses, which may overtake and stop the progress of arts and industry.

Though no system of government can be invented that will go on well, and as it were of itself, without a good head, or without some wisdom in its leaders; yet we know that a constitution may exist in which the common defects of human nature may be provided for, and which a bad leader may not be able to destroy, and by which an indifferent one may maintain the ground already gained, till a better guide arrive to carry us on to farther improvements.

A general



A general and perpetual congress, by representatives from all the European states; however impracticable at present, should not however be lost sight of. You know it was attempted by the Greeks, and with some success. If Europe should continue to improve in knowledge and wisdom, and acquire the habits of freedom, we may conceive such a wise institution to become practicable, and thence may proceed immense benefits to mankind, and the perfection of human government; that of each nation may be improved to the highest by the wisdom of the whole; all may thence become properly connected in policy and free intercourse of wants and knowledge, and one whole quarter of the world enjoy the best form of government that is possible among men. The idea might serve, at least, as a point from which may be measured the degrees of our political progress and perfection. Indeed something similar already exists in the endeavours of all to preserve a balance of power, which is of great effect and importance to the duration and stability of the different nations.

Confederacies have not yet been found to be so strong, so unitable, nor so durable, as might be expected: but a more perfect union, on our plan, by representatives with sufficient powers, and yet under proper control, seems capable of more perfection and extension than is hitherto known or imagined. The chief defects in the northern ideas of government, in Germany, Holland, &c. seem to consist in the want of the safe methods, and a liberal confidence, to delegate representatives with sufficient powers to legislate for them, and reform their constitutions where necessary. They want to enjoy the benefits of a great sovereignty, without granting the authority necessary to produce it. Until these little sovereignties, or tyrannies, of which the great one consists, give up to a proper legislature for the whole, a sufficient power to make laws, and can relinquish the pleasures of oppressing their subjects, they cannot expect to have a free, a happy, nor a powerful government.

As a great deal depends on the education and employment of the lower ranks of  
people,

people, the present deficiencies in these may be sufficient to stop the progress of mankind. Besides the nature and proper distribution of employment, the quantity or proportion of it may be of great consequence. Those who are totally occupied in procuring subsistence can have no exertions to spare for the public, unless those very exertions for existence chance to have a tendency that way, which fortunately is often naturally the case in well-regulated societies. But matters might surely be so ordered that all might have some time to spare for education, and all be induced to acquire the important habits of doing something in a direct manner for the good of the whole.

But the remarkable conclusions to be drawn from these Letters seem to be, that the improvement of the world depends most on education, and principally on that of princes, of women, and of the lower classes; and then on legislation, the form and formation of which seem to be of the utmost importance. Propagating the knowledge of mathematics,  
and

and of music, seems likewise of more consequence than is generally imagined.

Your doubts concerning the decline of Europe are very natural. I am glad you reflect on such comprehensive subjects. It may depend much on what we call accident. Though the torrent of manners is not to be stopped, yet we sometimes see a single event, or an individual, may give a turn to the tide. A single battle, a Pitt, a Frederic, or a North American revolution, may give a considerable bias to opinions, to many nations, and to an age. Yes; the improvements in war are as necessary, and constitute as essential a part of the whole advancement of the species, as those of any other art; and are necessary to the preservation of society, and of all the other arts. As war improves, conquests become more difficult. The taking a town may cost greater time and expence now than formerly a kingdom.

Your project and manner of travelling to improve the world as well as yourself, may do well enough as a half serious joke.



There have been people romantic enough to accompany you ; but I doubt your finding any such at présent, except perhaps some *odd man* in your own island. Wherever you go, I think you will find that the art which most impedes all the rest, is that of government. Till the true legislative spirit revive, the world cannot advance ; nor till the few nations that you see improve only by that spirit, can carry the rest along with them. A government can improve perhaps only by frequent renovations, and reverting repeatedly to the first principles of natural liberty and justice ; and you will find no such provision yet any where, nearly sufficient for the purpose. But there may be some hope for posterity. This is a writing, an experimenting, and rather a sensible, though a trifling age, and may hoard up the means of future legislative improvements ; and may furnish the necessary information, and the true patriotic zeal, to some liberal and philosophic prince, if such can be produced in spite of the disadvantages attending on courts, their birth and situation. But on the other hand, we have



reason to dread a decline, and may doubt if letters and knowledge be so diffused and established as never to be lost, when we consider on what precarious tenure they are held. A mistaken monarch, or minister, the accidental conquest of a stupid general, or the destructive hand of despotism, may soon banish and shut them all out. Law, police, science, arts, all that complex system has vanished from these rich Spanish plains, as from those of Fez, Campania, Greece, where they were thought to be fixed for ever.

I leave you to determine these, and many other points, I hope, from farther experience and reflection. You may, in time, be able to judge whether the chances are in favour of good education and public virtue, or the contrary ; how long the abuses of tyranny may be restrained by mutual fear and shame, or by a livelier sense of honour and justice, or by gentler manners, than formerly ; whether the decline of morals may not accompany the progress of arts and knowledge, and the people be

ingenious and industrious, yet weak and vicious, as we see in some manufacturing towns;—how long they may be protected by the arts which survive and supply the decay of military virtue; and without the help of an enemy, how long they may be in conquering themselves, in changing their nature and character, and thence the face of the country. We know from history the possibility of such a progress. Or, if you should think the world improving, you may be able to guess how long Europe may be in collecting and diffusing knowledge and virtue enough to perfect a system of government for herself; if we may soon hope to see tyranny and ignorance quietly vanquished, and nations change and improve their governments with ease and tranquillity, without civil wars and bloodshed.

I do not disapprove of your disliking the florid style now in use, for which I think our language so little adapted. We have doubtless a great deal of good writing in this age, though much of it is too fine;

and this meets with so great approbation, that I dread a decline, and that we may be encouraged to go on refining and ornamenting till we arrive at a depraved taste in writing, as in the other arts, for they are all connected. I have told you how I think this progress may be retarded or directed, by the education and assistance of the other sex. Read, by all means, the best writers on the subject of language, as Blair, though sometimes trifling; Lords Kaimes and Monboddo, though often wild and fanciful, yet ingenious. But I want you to follow me in the study of matter more than of manner; to look beyond style, and as you write, often seem to forget it. If the candid, who read and follow us, do not likewise forget it, we shall only have missed our aim; another may succeed: brevity and simplicity, and a certain contempt of finery and affectation, are not less the true genius and forte of our language. I know not that any of us have yet produced, in English prose, the true language of genius, without bordering on frenzy or madness. We have had writers equal and similar to De

Thous,

Thous, Mezerays, Davilas, and even Crebillons ; but have any of us written like Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, or Baccaria ? with all the brief and simple precision, yet temperate fire of genius and judgment ? though our language is certainly capable of all these, at least equally with theirs. I should perhaps consider Swift sometimes, and a few of our mathematical or scientific writers, as having come the nearest to what I mean.

A good writer in any original style has generally too much influence, and sets the fashion for too long a time, till his manner is worn to rags by his imitators. Most of our writers, for some time past, have tired us with perpetual attempts at wit and banter, because Swift and Addison did so with success ; and now, I suppose, we must all for a long time go upon stilts, because J— and G— have done so with some effect, though with so little grace and good taste ; and our writers, imitators of those different masters, may probably long be divisible into two classes, *stalkers* and *triflers*, till

œconomical Nature shall again produce some other original genius for us all to follow.

I fear you will find the commercial ideas of these two nations as yet too far behind the liberal principles of Adam Smith, to admit of any of the schemes of mutual advantage which you would propose. As they have hardly yet got beyond their own old engrossing or hoarding system, and only some are beginning to reason upon the *pedlar system* of considering a favourable balance in money, and the manufacturing every thing they want for themselves, as the only test of national prosperity, we cannot expect they will yet enter into any liberal or mutual beneficial plan of intercourse and exchange; especially while any plan that would enrich the people is not probably the object of those who govern them.

Had we more time and space, I should probably chuse to lay before you a still greater variety of general ideas and doubt-  
ful



ful opinions to enter the world with, and to be determined by your future experience, to serve as motives to enquiry, and as food for reflection, in the course of your travels. If any of you should think I have been harping too much on the theme of government, you must all bear a share of the blame for your instigation. If we English do not make something of that theme, I fear none else will. The seeing other nations so ignorant of the subject induces us to dwell more upon it. On our return, I suppose we shall forget and neglect it as completely as any of you; for I think these subjects are wearing out of fashion in our country, while they are quite the *ton* everywhere else, especially since this American dispute began.

Three things I have yet to recommend to you young travellers, and your friends: The first is, the common injunction of acquiring a general knowledge of your own country before you leave it, which I fear is not yet much better executed for being often repeated and generally known. Secondly, for you who have wives and fa-

milies, or female relations, to take them with you, if possible ; or to join some family party. The ladies and a domestic way of life will oblige you to become acquainted with many things and persons, of consequence to a knowledge of the world, and which you would overlook in running through a country *en garçon*. The third is, to fix your residence for a time in some part of a country before you begin to examine it, for many and obvious reasons. By this mode of mixing residence with travel, you may acquire a knowledge of some countries, and make up, as it were, in depth what may be wanting in distance. Those who travel for real improvement and information, should go abroad twice or three times in their lives, *viz.* when very young, to form the organs of speech to languages ; and then between twenty and thirty years of age, to learn what is useful, or at least to observe how things may be seen and examined another time ; for every country, in order to be well known, must be visited twice at least.

A  
L E T T E R  
FROM  
J E R S E Y.

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To A. J.

S I R,

Nov. 1787.

**I** AM glad to see you, and others, becoming more interested and active in promoting the prosperity of our distant coasts and islands, and that both the public and individual attention may in time reach the appendages and extremities of the kingdom; so that the loss of a distant empire may possibly be attended with the improvement of that at home, which is probably of far more importance to us. These islands in our channel, which we still possess, are certainly of great utility and credit to us as a commercial and maritime nation. The whole cluster of isles that form the British empire,

empire, has of late begun to feel and to shew a progress and degree of power unknown before, and if they could all be properly united and governed, and public wisdom accompany the progress of the other arts, they may in a century more serve the world as a pattern, and contribute more than all the other nations towards improving the rest of mankind. But this empire cannot probably exert above half its beneficial influence on the world, nor can its internal improvements advance with above half the celerity of which they are capable, till all its parts are properly united in one well-balanced legislature. The quick and progressive rise and improvement of the nation, since the union of the principal island, has been very remarkable; and let us hope the rest, Ireland not excepted, will all in time be so united in a similar, or perhaps a better and more intimate manner, as science and liberal principles shall gradually prevail over prejudice and ignorance. These smaller islands that surround the greater should certainly be so united

united and represented. The distant parts of the empire require perhaps a greater proportion of the public attention and encouragement than the rest, in order to bring them nearer to a par with the more central parts for their mutual benefit: and it affords pleasure to see such maxims begin to prevail, and hopes that even the Highlands of Scotland will not be much longer neglected. And let not the liberal minds give up in despair, though they should be repeatedly disappointed. The different attempts and disappointments will not be entirely lost. They call the public attention, and produce repeated discussions: men are thence better prepared to take advantage of accidents. Ignorance, public abuses, and the remains of feudal tyranny, may thus in time be gradually overcome, and at length be banished even from the extremities of all the British dominions.

The numerous beauties of this little island I shall not attempt to describe. The rocky promontories, and extensive amphitheatrical  
sandy



sandy bays of its coast, the internal little shady vales and streams, are all remarkably beautiful. The whole is perhaps too much covered with wood; the divisions of the land too small: the numerous fences planted with trees, together with the roads, occupy probably one-fourth of the island. The sea seems gaining on the west end, near St. Owen's Bay. The natural history and produce would require more attention than we can spare, and probably deserve it. These islands are obviously the tops of marine mountains, and similar to those of the Pyrenées, &c. consisting of a few different kinds of perhaps primitive rock, thrown up in confused heaps or shattered masses. Where any strata are perceptible, they are nearly perpendicular to the horizon.

Of the state of society and government, I shall only give you a few of my usual loose remarks. These islands have been held as a remnant of Normandy, by what accidental care and good fortune it is needless here to trace. Their form of govern-

ment is an old feudal aristocracy, established by king John, with the legislative, the judicial, and, for a time, the executive powers, in the same body of people, as was the mode in those times of war and ignorance. They have been considered as belonging not to our legislature, but to the crown, and have generally been under the administration or superintendence of the privy council, which is not I believe allowed to be very well constituted even for a court of law; how well calculated to be a legislative body I will not pretend to determine. The most democratic government must perhaps become aristocratic in some degree; the degree and form of which is of great importance. When it can be properly divided into an upper and lower part, separate, independent, and nearly balanced, and under the control properly limited of one head, the system may become nearly complete: but here, the two latter are defective. The upper and lower parts, the Peers and Commons, sit together, and the aristocratic part commonly governs, as usual in this form: the  
yet

yet ill-defined powers of the head is divided between a governor and a baily, who generally act by deputies. This *simulacre* of a constitution deceives at first view with some appearance of control and balance, of forms, elections, judges; but these are chiefly fallacies, and the whole has been too often found to be little better than a tyrannical aristocracy. The states or legislature consists of twelve jurats, elected by the whole island for life,—of twelve clergy, and of twelve members called constables, one elected by each parish for three years, with the lieutenant-baily who holds the states. The clergy are probably the best informed part of this legislature, and can have but few interested views. Where there are no places or preferment for them, and their livings being very small, it seems their interest to be popular among their parishioners; they are generally now on the side of the people, and seem to be proportionally disliked by the seigneurs. Their bishop, *viz.* of Winchester, surely ought to visit them sometimes, and they should have more students at our universities, where  
there

there is only a scanty provision of three fellowships, and twelve poor scholarships, for the two islands. The judicial power, or royal court, is only a certain number of the jurats, who, in this capacity, cannot be expected always to forget their political or party spirit; and accordingly they have often used their judicial power to promote their political views and influence, and causes are frequently decided in favour of their own party. As legislators, or as judges, they are placed in a cruel and difficult situation, and if they have been sometimes tyrannical and unjust, their political constitution is perhaps more in fault than they.

In order to procure justice and freedom, the efficient government, of whatever form, should be under some control, or it will degenerate into tyranny:—such is man. This aristocracy has been formerly long in the habits of governing without any sufficient restraint; and though a spirit of liberty and opposition has at length found its way hither, and the jurats have lost their great influence in the states, yet they may  
again

again recover it, and resume their wonted despotic sway, if the privy council should be too partial to the aristocratic part: Their present situation, full of perpetual struggles between the governing and popular parties, creates violent heats and animosities, and threatens dangerous confusion, as usual in small places, especially if no umpire of sufficient authority and influence is present to decide the contest, and with wisdom enough to preserve the balance. The restoring and supporting their ancient tyranny can hardly now be intended, as some of them suspect, being a measure so highly unworthy an English government, and could only be effected by such violent means as would in these days disgrace any nation. The only remedy is to mend their constitution, and give them some English laws, which is now much desired by many. Juries, in the way which they themselves propose, and which were anciently in use here as in Normandy, would probably answer well enough for them, *viz.* in cases where desired by the parties. It may be alleged, that in such small places their de-

cisions



cisions would still be only the voice of party ; but these, by being generally the opinion of a majority, would probably be nearly and often right, and would be less partial than the judgment of arbitrary and interested magistrates.

Such a baseless fabric as this old French aristocracy is not now long to be supported, and was only practicable in the hands of wisdom or artifice, and experience ; but must crumble to pieces if it should repeatedly fall under the guidance of folly, vanity, passion, or inexperience, and still more if under all these together.

It might be owing to the tyranny, insufficiency, or non-residence of former governors, that their power has been divided : the civil part has been given to a baily who holds the states, &c. by deputy ; and little else besides the military part, remains to the governor. Unless these two chance to be very wise and temperate men, they must be at perpetual war. In the body politic, there is no supplying the want or deficiency of a head : every substitute or contrivance for that purpose

can form only a monster which cannot live long. It is better there be always a necessity for a good head, to oblige sovereigns to look out for proper governors, and not indulge them in thinking their fools or favourites sufficient. Besides, we should attend to the change of times and manners for many obvious reasons. Even proper military lieutenant-governors may now perhaps be more easily found than lieutenant-bailies above mediocrity, or sufficiently qualified for the head of such a state. The army may now produce as many men of sufficient probity, honour, and general knowledge, as any other line of life. It is not to be easily understood why we have been so backward in giving these people the same kind of government with our other islands, by a governor, senate, and assembly.

In every country and form of rule, there ought perhaps to be complaints and abuses enough to feed and maintain an opposition as a watch and control upon power; and when opposition is increased to a majority, by the increase of abuses, they are thus often redressed. This opposition having

of late grown up to a majority, under every disadvantage, marks that it is high time to change and improve their constitution. Though these poor people may not have so much to complain of as they imagine, or as might be expected under so imperfect a government; though they may naturally magnify their own evils and sufferances; yet they ought surely to have at least some of them redressed. They might succeed better, perhaps in every sense, with more patience and moderation; but these qualities may be more difficult to acquire in proportion to the smallness of the society, and defective form of its constitution. This is not a government of laws, but of persons, which usually degenerates into tyranny. They can hardly indeed be said to have any laws, except a few orders of council, and some vague and uncertain old customs, which are naturally neglected and forgotten by an arbitrary government. But since Colonel Campbell, their lieutenant-governor in 1761, first encouraged an opposition to the reigning magistrates, their minds and views have been gradually opening, and they have caught a little of

that spirit of freedom and discussion which surrounds them in Europe; and it seems rather surprising, that our government has not yet encouraged their efforts, nor seconded that gentleman's benevolent endeavours, and has been so remiss in granting them more of our laws and constitution. However, their legislative ideas seem to be advancing by their contentions, more than for centuries before. The principles and improvements of the age must probably, in time, reach these islands.

Though they may yet be considered as children in politics, and unfit to govern themselves; though they may not all sufficiently consider the long gradation necessary to perfection in domestic policy, nor the difficulties, or rather impossibility of adopting, at once, all the laws and constitution of England, which have required the progression of ages to attain the present degree of excellence, and which their state is not yet ripe for; this perhaps ought to cost them much time and pains, and must prove the result of gradual experience. However, some of them are sensible of this,  
and



and wish it to be gradual. You might begin either by granting them the juries they desire, or by improving their constitution only by a small alteration in its form ; by separating the states into two houses, with a governor only ; and the other necessary changes would gradually follow of course. To do this in the wisest and most temperate manner, send them proper commissioners first to examine and report.

Many think the form of government immaterial, if the people are contented. You know I do not think so ; but even that excuse for standing still, or for checking the natural human progress, will probably soon be removed ; for much of the world seem now to be changing their ideas very fast on these subjects. In this progress, the wisest rulers will give way to some of the inevitable innovations, and will attempt only to limit the degree, and restrain the impetuosity, but not forcibly oppose the carrying of some speculations into practice. If any of them are really great, these will step forward and become the leaders of temperate reformation ; they will establish and repair, but not destroy systems, and will become great legislators, and the re-



founders of lasting nations. The gradual improvement of man, of the society or the species, is an interesting progress, in which the knowledge of his own errors is the first step; and to which the theories, and even hints of speculation, and the facts of experience, are all equally necessary and conducive. In this progress, political and legislative knowledge seems to be the most necessary, and hitherto the most deficient. But all the assistance of such knowledge cannot perhaps be expected till education is better understood, nor till theory is more generally joined with practice, study with experience and travel. I could sometimes wish no man to be admitted as a magistrate, more than a pastor, who had not passed some certain degree or examination at an university, if we did not see that numbers may take that road and bring away very little useful science: and yet some of these may become even ministers of state long before they know on what the prosperity of a nation depends. Such knowledge is not to be found ready for use in books and college lectures, nor in the huge volumes of the law, however necessary these may be, as a foundation for experience to build upon.

upon. Hence our political and commercial principles have been so often deficient. It may require yet much more time, and a more general information, to banish all the remains of our monopolizing corporation ideas of commerce and balance of trade, founded on opinions and sentiments unworthy a Jew pedler, *viz.* on a mean jealousy of all the world, and wishing no nation to have a profit or favourable balance but ourselves; and it was shameful to see ministers, not very long ago, reasoning from the ideas of the meanest monopolist, desirous that other nations should take our manufactures, and make nothing for themselves that should enable them to pay us: whereas it might easily be shewn that the highest cultivation and industry of the world would proportionally increase the commerce of all nations. From the same kind of narrow principles have proceeded much of our politics of late, endeavouring to engross the trade and dependence of colonies and distant countries, to our mutual disadvantage. It is to be feared there are still some who think we were wrong in permitting to our colonies such good forms of government by which they

prospered so fast, and became more independent on our caprices; but chiefly by our own folly and tyranny they were separated from us before their time. Those people would have had us imitate Spain, and secure the dependence of our colonies by their poverty and depopulation. Will it be believed by posterity, that such sentiments prevailed in the first nation of the world during the eighteenth century? Such maxims and events are certainly of historical importance, and should be held up to posterity in their proper colours. But let us hope our public councils will now improve, as general knowledge and more liberal legislative principles gradually prevail in the world, and that the times are nearly past which produced stamp acts, Quebec bills, and such proceedings as lost us an empire. Let us give way, or rather take the lead in the improvements of the age. Mystery and oppression cannot long subsist, nor succeed as hitherto, in these investigating and enlightened times, and must probably be gradually relinquished, and banished from the art of governing mankind. How much better to lead than be driven,

driven, and to bestow in time with a good grace what must at length be, as it were, extorted by the general voice? Even when a Conway shall be no more, though virtue and science shall then drop a tear, other friends to liberty and justice will arise, to support and extend their reviving principles, and who will lead your long-neglected islanders into the general legislature, or to all the benefits of the British laws and government. There is a kind of liberality, which is the highest wisdom, in politics, and though not yet much known, may in time prevail. Let us be timely wise, and grant prosperity to the remotest parts of the empire, at present disinterestedly, for their benefit, but which will in time result to the good of the whole. The political heart, that shall freely circulate blood and life to the extremities, will have it returned with double vigour and advantage. Grant them, by degrees, all the freedom, immunities, and good government they desire; you will reap the profit in the course of time, and of their natural progress, without any of the mercantile insidious arts or monopolizing stipulations.

I think



I think I find here most of my old political principles confirmed by experience, and on a scale neither too small for fair experiment, nor too large for the eye to take in by comparative views, nor too full of uncertainty from the complication of different causes. In most old establishments, in all unfair modes of government, but especially in aristocracies, there is a natural tendency to keep things as they are, and hence to exclude almost all improvements by which the rulers fear they may chance to lose some power or influence. They are naturally jealous of the merchant, the manufacturer, the rich *bourgeois* or *parvenus*, and of every innovator or improver. Here, they are accordingly jealous even of the commerce that would finally enrich themselves, and of the very learning and the schools that would enlighten and improve all. This is the small working model of a great nation. We see human nature at work as we do bees through the glass hive. There doubtless must always be a difference of rank among men in society; but on the proper regulation and limitation of that difference will depend  
much



much of their progress and political happiness. Whether the people are most happy in slavery or in freedom, was once disputed in the countries that are now the freest and most civilized, and is disputed still in Russia, Poland, the West Indies, &c. That they are more active and industrious with liberty and security, can now hardly be doubted. In every society there is a natural tendency and progression towards an injurious difference, an increasing inequality in rank and riches. The best governments will be known by their contriving just and gentle limits and obstructions to this evil, and that shall raise and support the poor and helpless against the rich and powerful, between whom there is always a secret, but very unequal war and enmity. We may doubt if there be any government yet established, that is completely adequate to this task, but we may presume that our own comes the nearest to it, and may hope it will come nearer still. But I am perhaps too easily led into general reflections, in search of practical truths, and principles of importance. You know  
I con-

I consider the art or science of legislation as yet in its infancy.

The things that are wanting to make these poor islanders as happy as nature allows, may be few though essential. A mediocrity, rather bordering on poverty, with a purity and simplicity of manners, seem to prevail here. A division of property, uncommonly minute, provides a sort of independent subsistence for a greater number than is almost anywhere to be found on an equal space of territory. The ancient slavish conditions of some of their tenures should be abolished, as the labour due to the *seigneur*, and the corn rents, &c. These few small alterations, with the trials by jury, some English laws, and perhaps members of parliament, may form nearly the sum of what they want at present; as these would gradually bring the other requisites towards making them more industrious, populous, and more important islands to England. Their poor and parsimonious appearance, and modes of living, of dress, of farming, their utensils, manners, &c. seem all as yet a little too much in the French style. They ought surely,

surely, by this time, to have been more like English people. Our government has certainly been the most to blame in this. I doubt we are constitutionally inadequate or unfit for the management of foreign possessions, till they are incorporated in our legislature, and thence all become gradually subject to the same laws. A large proportion of the men here go to sea, while their small possessions are but indifferently cultivated. Under better government, laws, and tenures, this uncommon junction of the trades of sailor and farmer might be separated, and both succeed better; with many other beneficial effects, as more activity, education, &c.

This island may be considered as a model in some essentials, and worthy the imitation of greater states; as in the military arrangements, and system of defence, which have been so highly improved, and almost formed *de novo*, by the present governor, General Conway, whom these people style their father and defender. The whole of the inhabitants, of all ranks, have been formed into an excellent militia, in which there are many points that shew the very rare degree of military science of the institutor,

stitutor, as well as his towers, and the whole systematic defence of the coast. I think the uniform he has given them here, the jacket and long trowsers, is the best military dress I have yet seen, and answers all the purposes we want. These, with the artillery part of each corps, and several other regulations, are highly worthy of imitation. To complete the system, a place of strength is wanting; one that should stand a siege of a certain time, and that could be readily supplied and relieved by sea, which is a chief object in every fortification for us, and indeed the only circumstance that can now render a place impregnable, such as Tyre, Bergenopzoom, Gibraltar, might be made. A harbour, protected by the fort, might likewise be formed, for frigates at least, as these might be of signal service so stationed, particularly at the beginning of a war. The importance of these islands to England, as advanced posts, &c. need not, I hope, be here demonstrated to you. In the civil wars, you know they remained firmly loyal, and by their annoyance of the Parliament's forces by sea, shewed what mischief



mischief they might do us in the hands of an enemy. Charles II. knew their importance, and always obstinately refused, when in the greatest want of assistance, to sell them to France for that purpose.

It appears that the Druids resorted much to these islands, as well as to Anglesea. The ruins of above fifty of their monuments or temples have been discovered here; one lately, very complete, which is going to be sent to their Governor's at Park Place. The Druids were right. These secluded isles were then well suited for study and meditation, and probably for their mysterious worship, and for safety. This beautiful island, I think, even now well adapted for study, and for education, and possesses many advantages for a good school, being the only place we know where French and English are spoken equally well by all ranks above the common and country people. The courts of justice, and law pleadings in French; the preaching in both languages, alternately: a pleasant retired and healthy country; innocency and simplicity of manners; great œconomy,  
with



with a mediocrity of wealth and condition ; the inhabitants all protestants ; little æconomical tours to France with the scholars might be easily made. I know of no place abroad possessing so many advantages for an early education \*.

I know of no good account published of these islands. That of Jersey, by the Rev. Mr. Falle, is justly reckoned the best. Dr. Shëbbeare has written a violent scurrilous account of invective upon their late transactions. He had good materials, the MS. of the late Mr. Le Geit, a respectable character, and well informed. The Doctor could write, and seems to have wanted little more than a greater share of temper and moderation to have made a very good book of it ; but he has made a very bad one.

\* Here is Mr. Duprè, bred at Oxford, minister of the capital parish, a character every way qualified and ready for the office of chief master. Others might be found here, and some be brought from England and France. Mr. Duprè would now, by himself, take a dozen boys, and could prepare them for the university.

T H E E N D.









